



UNFF-3 HIGHLIGHTS

WEDNESDAY, 28 MAY 2003

On Wednesday, delegates convened in the morning to complete the multi-stakeholder dialogue and address common items on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination. In the afternoon, delegates discussed the substantive item on the IPF/IFF proposals for action on forest health and productivity.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

In the morning, Bureau member Conceição Ferreira (Portugal) resumed, and delegates completed, the multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD). ETHIOPIA spoke of the causes and consequences of deforestation, and appealed for financial assistance to improve developing country representation at future meetings. The LOW FOREST COVER COUNTRIES (LFCC) Secretariat highlighted its constitutional regional meeting. The US lauded the quality of this session's MSD.

ENHANCED COOPERATION AND POLICY AND PROGRAMME COORDINATION

Pekka Patosaari, UNFF Coordinator and Head, introduced a note from the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2003/6). He noted collaboration between the UNFF and existing international conventions and institutions, listed regional partnerships, and emphasized the UNFF Secretariat's role in facilitating the flow of forest-related information.

Hosny El-Lakany, Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), presented a progress report on the CPF's work (E/CN.18/2003/INF/1), highlighting the development of the Sourcebook on Funding for SFM, the creation of a task force on streamlining reporting, and progress on the harmonization of forest-related definitions since UNFF-2.

Morocco, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, supported by CUBA, TOGO, and MALAYSIA, underlined the role of partnerships in achieving SFM. Identifying poverty eradication as a foremost challenge, he underscored the importance of synergy among CPF members, but, with NEW ZEALAND, cautioned against "micro-management" of cooperation without practical outcomes. He called for enhanced capacity building and technology transfer, and encouraged the UNFF to enhance its collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Greece, on behalf of the EU and accession countries, called for enhanced dissemination of existing information, such as the CPF Sourcebook on Financing, harmonizing forest-related definitions, streamlining reporting, and enhancing collaboration with other relevant

UN Conventions and organizations. JAPAN requested CPF members to avoid duplication of efforts and asked the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization and other CPF members to advance their work under the National Forest Programme Facility. SENEGAL proposed a voluntary fund with the participation of developing countries. INDIA stressed the need for financial resources to ensure effective cooperation and encouraged the CPF to follow the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) relating to partnerships. CHINA recommended reinforcing information exchange and coordination among the CSD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification, and other international organizations, such as the WTO, and enhancing public participation while respecting national culture and individual countries' level of development. IRAN stressed the need for technical support to LFCCs and recommended that UNFF-3 call upon relevant international organizations to address this issue.

CUBA stressed the connection between forests and biodiversity and called for increased coordination between the UNFF and the CBD. NORWAY underscored the linkages between forest policy and poverty alleviation, and encouraged CPF members to assist countries in facilitating voluntary certification, support regional partnerships, and further collaborate with the CBD and the CSD. MALAYSIA drew attention to the CBD's analysis of the relationship between ecosystem approaches and SFM. He said that regional partnerships should respect national policy priorities. TOGO lamented the disparity among countries in progress on implementation. FINLAND underscored the need to link SFM to policies on poverty reduction, food security, and gender equality. After commending the work of the CPF, the US urged it to: continue work on financing before UNFF-4; publicize the Sourcebook on Funding; explore opportunities available through the Millennium Development Fund; and seek enhanced interaction with the World Bank's new Forest Programme. She also signalled her support for a modified proposal for regional assessment facilitation teams, stressing that it is the CPF member organizations that should support their implementation.

AUSTRALIA described outcomes of regional initiatives enhancing the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action, and stressed the need to identify priorities for implementation and strengthen cross-sectoral linkages at the national level.

NEW ZEALAND lauded the CPF's Sourcebook on Funding and called for continued CPF efforts to strengthen synergies with other relevant bodies. EGYPT questioned the UNFF's effectiveness, since developing countries often lack the means to attend

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UNFF sessions. The IUCN stressed the importance of poverty eradication as a key to SFM, and called for the presentation of a review of cooperation efforts at UNFF-4.

OTHER MATTERS

Under other matters, UNFF Coordinator and Head Patosaari gave a presentation on the status of the Secretariat and the UNFF budget, and said activities of the Secretariat include: holding bureau meetings; participating in CPF meetings; preparing documentation for UNFF sessions; producing a newsletter; and maintaining a website. He said that US\$983,000 is available from the Trust Fund of voluntary contributions, and proposed that it be used to assist developing countries to attend UNFF sessions.

Morocco, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, and SENEGAL, expressed concern with the low participation of developing countries in at UNFF-3, and called for travel assistance to ensure equitable representation. SENEGAL lamented delays in delivering travel assistance, and asked why per diems were not provided at UNFF-3. Patosaari responded that the decision on that issue was made by the General Assembly and applies to all UN meetings, but suggested that donors provide travel assistance bilaterally.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION AND THE UNFF PLAN OF ACTION

Tiina Vähänen (FAO) outlined progress in the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action relating to forest health and productivity (E/CN.18/2003/5). Highlighting ongoing international programmes to reduce air pollution, she called for harmonized monitoring and reporting methods. She stressed the importance of preventive approaches in dealing with emerging threats, such as forest fires, storm damage, climate change and pests and diseases; reduced reliance on *ad hoc* responses to disasters; mitigation of the effects of climate change; regional collaboration; and monitoring and networking.

Greece, on behalf of the EU and the accession countries, reiterated the EU's commitment to reducing the emission of air pollutants and greenhouse gases, and encouraged the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. He called for enhanced research on forests' role as carbon sinks and emphasized the threat of invasive alien species and forest fires.

Morocco, on behalf of G-77/China, recommended that UNFF-3, *inter alia*, dedicate more attention to those factors listed as emerging issues, which are more important than air pollution in many countries; strengthen the text on the means of implementation in its proposals for action; and reflect the fact that developing countries make substantial efforts within their capacities to address air pollution. INDONESIA and CHINA described their efforts to restore forest productivity. SENEGAL called for greater attention to the needs and priorities of the African countries.

SAUDI ARABIA called for focus on prevention, rather than on reforestation, in forest health management. COLOMBIA recommended linking CBD strategies and NFPs, developing integrated strategies for the restoration of ecosystems, and creating biological corridors. POLAND stressed the need to address forest productivity and health issues together, based on SFM and ecosystem approaches. IRAN outlined qualitative and quantitative measures of forest degradation in Iran. ECUADOR stressed the need for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and an integrated scientific approach to the evaluation of forest functions. GUATEMALA stressed the importance of preventive approaches, education and the international exchange of experiences. INDIA said the

report relates the concept of forest health too narrowly to air pollution and called for international assistance in developing research capacity. MEXICO called for more information on the causes of deforestation. CANADA overviewed its achievements in ecosystem-based approaches to forest management. MALAYSIA requested CPF members to initiate studies on the effects of smoke, haze and climate change on forests. ARGENTINA called for increased research efforts and stressed its role in promoting regional cooperation and national actions related to emerging threats. AUSTRALIA said regional initiatives on fire management should be secondary to national programmes. PERU stressed the negative effects of global warming on forest health.

BRAZIL, supported by CUBA, remarked that the report lacks focus on technology transfer, capacity building and resource mobilization and is biased towards developed countries, ignoring their emission histories. CUBA said the consequences of climate change are felt most in tropical and small island countries. The US stressed the need for better understanding of the linkages between forest cover, health and productivity, and economic issues, and highlighted the ecological interlinkages between the issues of invasive species and forest health and productivity. JAPAN stressed the need for enhanced monitoring efforts and preventive measures, and highlighted a bilateral fire-prevention programme. NEW ZEALAND underscored the need for bio-security strategies. FRANCE described activities of its governmental forest health department, highlighting its ability to link diagnoses of forest conditions to activities on the ground.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On Wednesday, key delegations were busy brokering a compromise on the parameters expert group before Thursday's informal consultation. The buzz centered around a proposal by a major developed country to create a small task force to plan the work of a parameters expert group with universal membership that would convene after UNFF-4. Despite Bureau pressure to finalize the issue no later than Thursday, some delegates were not so optimistic. Some even went so far as to speculate that the reason UNFF's financial position was reviewed on Wednesday was to signal to certain donor countries that a parameters expert group might come at a cost.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

THURSDAY

INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE AD HOC

EXPORT GROUPS: This consultation will convene from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm in the Swiss Mission to continue discussing, with a view to finalizing, the terms of reference for the *ad hoc* export groups. A consolidated Chair's text will be available by 1:00 pm on Thursday.

FRIDAY

PLENARY: UNFF-3 will reconvene from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm to discuss, *inter alia*, economic aspects of forests and regional initiatives.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL: An informal gathering to discuss the Australian proposal for regional assessment facilitation teams will convene at 10.00 am in Room XVII.