



**THE EXPERTS' MEETING OF THE COSTA RICA-CANADA INITIATIVE
22-26 FEBRUARY 1999**

The Experts' Meeting of the Costa Rica-Canada Initiative (CRCI) in support of Category III of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) met in San José, Costa Rica from 22-26 February 1999. Sponsored by the Governments of Costa Rica and Canada, the meeting was attended by 87 experts from governments, intergovernmental institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from more than 40 countries. The Initiative consists of a process to identify possible elements and work toward a consensus on the usefulness of having international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally-binding instrument (LBI) on all types of forests. The Initiative seeks to provide neutral, transparent, participatory and representative fora to facilitate technical discussion on LBIs on all types of forests and consider possible elements of such instruments.

The Experts' Meeting was the first of three stages that comprise the Costa Rica-Canada Initiative. The objectives of this meeting were to: recall the mandate agreed concerning Category III of the IFF's programme of work (international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests); consider lessons learned from implementation of existing instruments; discuss general concepts of legal instruments and possible elements of legal instruments on forests; review the experience of Central America with regard to regional cooperation; provide guidance for regional and sub-regional consultations; and examine further action required to build global consensus and generate suggestions for further actions between March 1999-February 2000.

The results of the Experts' Meeting will be forwarded by the Governments of Costa Rica and Canada for consideration as part of the official documentation for the third session of the IFF (IFF-3) in May 1999. The results will also be forwarded to the series of regional and sub-regional meetings that comprise the second stage of the Initiative and to the final CRCI meeting in Canada. The third stage, which will consolidate the results of the San José meeting and the suggestions of the regional meetings and produce general conclusions and will be submitted to IFF-4 in early 2000.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INITIATIVE

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS: In 1995, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) established the open-ended *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) to pursue consensus and coordinated Proposals for Action to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The IPF focused on 12 programme elements under five chapter headings, on: implementation of UNCED forest-related decisions; international cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer; research, assessment and development of criteria and indica-

tors (C&I) for sustainable forest management (SFM); trade and environment; and international organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments. The Panel met four times from 1995-1997 and submitted its final report to CSD-5 in April 1997.

The report contains approximately 140 proposals for action, including a call for continued intergovernmental forest policy dialogue. However, IPF delegates could not agree on a few major issues such as financial assistance and trade-related matters or whether to begin negotiations on a global forest convention.

The final IPF report proposed three options on international organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments: continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests within existing fora such as the CSD, FAO and other appropriate international organizations, institutions and instruments; establish an *ad hoc*, open-ended IFF under the CSD charged with, *inter alia*, reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and monitoring IPF implementation (sub-options under this proposal recommended either preparing the basis and building consensus for a decision on and elements of a LBI by 1999, or considering the need for other arrangements and mechanisms, including legal arrangements, reporting at the appropriate time in the CSD's work programme); or establish, as soon as possible, an intergovernmental negotiating committee on a LBI on all types of forests with a focused and time-limited mandate. The final IPF report also recognized the need for improved coordination and noted that no single body, organization or instrument can address in a balanced, holistic way all issues on the international agenda related to all types of forests.

UNGASS: CSD-5 adopted the IPF's report and forwarded a set of recommendations to the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) in June 1997 to conduct an overall review and appraisal of progress in implementing the UNCED agreements. At UNGASS, the General Assembly decided to continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests through the establishment of an *ad hoc* open-ended IFF under the aegis of the CSD. In addition, it decided that "the Forum should also identify the possible elements of and work toward consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a LBI." The Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/65 established the IFF, with a mandate to report to CSD-8 in 2000.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS: The IFF held its organizational session (IFF-1) from 1-3 October 1997 in New York. IFF-2 took place from 24 August-4 September 1998 in Geneva, where delegates conducted background discussion on, *inter alia*, international arrangements and mechanisms. The document summarizing IFF-2's background discussion on this topic states that participants noted the following: effective international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests are of the utmost importance and

their adequacy must be addressed; deliberations should draw on existing international and regional arrangements and mechanisms as well as on the IPF Proposals for Action; and implementation of the IFF's mandate on this topic requires initial emphasis on identifying possible elements and, in the course of the process, continued emphasis on working toward a global consensus. It further states that there is at present no global instrument that deals with all types of forests in a comprehensive and holistic way and hence reaching consensus and engaging in further action requires a step-by-step approach, focused on issues of international concern, conducted in a transparent and participatory manner and without prejudging the outcome.

COSTA RICA-CANADA INITIATIVE: During discussions at IFF-2, the Governments of Costa Rica and Canada announced their intention to collaborate to initiate a process to identify possible elements and work towards a consensus on the usefulness of having international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a LBI on all types of forests. Several delegates at IFF-2 supported the Initiative and expressed interest in participating.

The CRCI was based on the understanding that building consensus requires a process of clarifying issues and identifying commonalities. The Initiative thus aims to facilitate exchanges of views through holistic and comprehensive discussions and open dialogue to enhance the consideration and identification of elements necessary to build a global consensus on the issue of international arrangements and mechanisms.

The Initiative consists of three stages: the Experts' Meeting in San José; a series of regional and sub-regional meetings to follow San José; and a final meeting in Canada in November 1999. The regional meetings will build on the findings of the Experts' Meeting, analyzing the benefits and possible elements of legal instruments from the perspective of each of the major regions. The final meeting in Canada will consolidate the results of the San José meeting and the suggestions obtained from the regional meetings and produce general conclusions. These conclusions will be submitted to IFF-4.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday, 22 February 1999, participants at the San José Experts' Meeting of the CRCI convened in a Plenary session to hear opening remarks and special presentations on general concepts and terms of international instruments and the Central American experience in developing its regional forest convention. The meeting organizers presented the five-step approach to be undertaken during the Initiative. Participants met in four working groups from Monday afternoon to Thursday morning to undertake the first three steps of the Initiative's approach. On Tuesday, presentations were made on lessons learned from implementation of other existing instruments in Thailand, Costa Rica and Finland and on national forest programmes (NFPs) and the Forest Partnership Agreement. Participants met in Plenary on Thursday to review the proposed approach to guide the regional consultations and to discuss further action for building consensus. On Friday, participants considered the final report of the meeting.

OPENING PLENARY

IFF Co-Chair Bagher Asadi welcomed participants to the meeting. He emphasized that the objective of the Initiative was to make constructive contributions to the IFF process. He stressed that the upcoming regional processes should shed light on the particular problems faced by each region to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of issues under Category III. He noted that the list of international forest issues provided to participants was too long, lacked focus and needed to be consolidated. He stressed that the problems of

low forest cover countries, particularly of developing countries with low forest cover, were missing from the list and from discussions in general and should be addressed. He wished the Initiative success in its endeavors.

Jacques Carette, Canadian CRCI Co-Chair, noted that the Initiative arose from a common desire to contribute to the IFF's programme of work by facilitating the identification and discussion of issues and possible elements of agreement related to the management, conservation and sustainable use of forests. He emphasized the need for transparent, neutral, participatory and representative fora with balanced and geographically equitable representation from all interested parties. He said an improved working relationship between all parties should be the outcome of the Initiative, leading to better-informed and balanced decisions resulting from shared commitment to the process.

Luis Rojas, Costa Rican CRCI Co-Chair, acknowledged the importance of full participation, transparency and consensus to enable the Initiative to make true progress. He emphasized the need to consider regional experiences and the concerns of all participating countries.

Jag Maini, IFF Secretariat, recalled the agreed IFF mandate concerning Category III. He observed that forest discussions had generally followed two tracks, one focusing on sustainable conservation and management of forests as a primary goal and the other considering forests and their functions as solutions to other problems such as desertification and global warming. Maini noted that the Forest Principles and the creation of the IPF followed the first track. He recalled that the IPF was created to clarify the work of international institutions and existing instruments and to consider and advise on the need for other instruments or arrangements to further implement the Forest Principles.

He noted that after four meetings and several intersessional activities over two years, the IPF concluded that there is a need to strengthen coordination among conventions and institutions to enable more holistic responses to forests at regional and international levels. The IPF acknowledged that no single institution or instrument has the mandate or capacity to address forests in a holistic manner. It found that many international LBIs, while not directly related to forests, were relevant and could contribute to forest conservation but required better coordination. Maini noted that the creation of the IFF was based on the IPF's recommendation and UNGASS's to continue work on unresolved issues. He recalled that UNGASS emphasized that countries needed to provide guidance to the governing bodies of relevant international institutions and instruments to coordinate forest-related work and decided that the IFF should identify possible elements of and work toward consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a LBI on all types of forests.

Governments have been requested to develop an agreement or a consensus on major components of an international agenda at IFF-3 in May 1999 and to further them as elements. Maini underscored that the aim of the CRCI was to help identify these elements and enable thoughtful discussions and informed decisions at the IFF.

France Bergeron, Canadian Co-Manager of the CRCI Secretariat, outlined the results of the October 1998 meeting of the CRCI Steering Committee, including consensus on its role, regional meetings and the agenda and objectives of the San José meeting. She noted the mandate of the Steering Committee to, *inter alia*, ensure the neutrality and transparency of the Initiative, select issues for discussion, and analyze documents for the regional meetings. Patricia Chaves, Costa Rican Co-Manager of the CRCI Secretariat, summarized the activities of the second Steering Committee meeting held on 21 February 1999, including: discussions on a common approach for the regional meetings; demonstrations of support for the Initiative; offers to host regional meetings; and announcements of financial and intellectual contributions.

The Plenary then adopted the agenda of the meeting. Regarding the organization of work, Guido Chaves, Costa Rican Expert for the CRCI, noted that working groups would be established, and Libby Jones (UK), Adam Delaney (Papua New Guinea), Jean William Sollo (Cameroon) and Clayton Hall (Guyana) were nominated as Rapporteurs for the working groups.

Jorge Rodríguez, Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), presented the Central American experience in environmental integration and development of the Central American Forest Convention (CAFC). He highlighted regional activities, including the creation of the CCAD, the formulation of the Tropical Forest Action Plan for Central America, the Central American Council on Forests and the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development, and underscored the importance of regional cooperation in developing the CAFC. He highlighted CCAD's role in addressing biodiversity, climate change, forests and protected areas. Noting the transboundary nature of ecological problems, he emphasized the importance of a regional approach. Rodríguez said the economic value of forests was not adequately accounted for as a percentage of GDP because the provision of services such as recreation was overlooked. He identified globalization and structural adjustment as factors exacerbating deforestation. Commenting on the role of forests in climate change, he noted the potential for Central American forests to benefit from the Clean Development Mechanism and to provide carbon sequestration.

Barbara Ruis, Amsterdam's Free University, presented an overview of general concepts and terms of international legal instruments. She stated that arrangements on forests could be included in national LBIs or non-legally binding instruments (NLBIs) and noted that existing agreements on forests comprise a complex mixture of LBIs, NLBIs and processes. She listed sources of international law, including treaties, custom, general legal principles, judicial decisions, learned writers and other possible sources, such as acts of international organizations, soft law and equity. She stressed that international law involves the creation of new laws as well as the abolition of outdated ones. She noted that machinery for reform of public international law does not exist as it does at the national level, making the relationship between older international conservation treaties and new ones such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) or the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) unclear. She outlined four stages leading to the entry into force of a treaty: acquisition of domestic authority to negotiate and adopt a treaty; negotiations; expression of consent to be bound by the treaty; and a period between expressing consent and actual entry into force. She highlighted that much of this process occurs at the national level.

She explained that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties defines a treaty as "an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation." Examples of "designation" include treaties, agreements, conventions, charters, protocols or declarations, and these carry varying degrees of political significance but have the same legal power.

She noted that a country usually demonstrates intention of consent to be bound through signature of a treaty, signifying that it will act in accordance with that treaty's objective. A signatory then ratifies the treaty to express its consent to be bound. She noted that the possibility for a State to make a reservation is an option in many treaties and that changes to an agreed text are normally done by amendment to the treaty.

She noted the different conditions under which a treaty can enter into force: ratification by all drafting States; designation of a specific date for its activation; or determination of specific conditions that,

once met, automatically activate the treaty. Ruis noted that customary international law has equal status to treaties under international law, but treaties apply only to Parties whereas customary international law applies to all States. She counselled against the use of the term "soft law" due to the absence of a fixed or solid legal definition. She also cautioned against the danger of a lowest common denominator approach in addressing the gap between acceptability and effectiveness in treaty negotiations and enforcement, and underlined the need for coordination among States as a result of regional and global interdependence.

In the ensuing discussion, one participant addressed the relationship between existing agreements dealing with forests and a potential convention on forests, querying whether it would be useful for a global forest convention to harmonize these other instruments rather than supersede them. Ruis noted that the inclusion of articles tying a LBI on forests to other treaties relevant to forests could promote better coordination. Another speaker stressed that the international community should not dismiss any options for addressing forest issues and that more stood to be gained from addressing substantive issues rather than whether a LBI is needed.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING INSTRUMENTS

On Tuesday afternoon, delegates heard presentations on lessons learned in implementing existing agreements in Thailand, Costa Rica and Finland.

Thailand: Apiwat Sretarugsa gave a brief history of Thailand's involvement in Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at domestic, regional and international levels. He noted that Thailand has a history in wildlife preservation predating its ratification of CITES in 1983. Its first wildlife preservation law was passed in 1960, and the 1992 Wildlife Preservation Act was an effort to bring Thai laws in line with CITES regulations. Thailand created its first wildlife preserve in 1965 and now has more than 20 preserves. He highlighted regional initiatives, including Thailand's 1998 meeting with Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos to increase cross-border cooperation in combating illegal trafficking. At the international level, he noted that positive relations with other CITES Parties and multilateral organizations have facilitated the transfer of information and technology to Thailand.

Finland: Heikki Granholm highlighted the relationship between the FCCC and forests in Finland. He noted the forest sector's potential capacity to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere through the protection, enhancement and establishment of carbon stocks and the provision of biomass and wood-based products. He identified SFM as the best method for ensuring carbon sinks in Finland and highlighted that since 1924 the rate of forest growth has exceeded that of forest depletion in Finland. He noted several questions surrounding carbon stocks yet to be addressed by the Kyoto Protocol, including the definition of stocks and accounting and verification methods. He expressed concern regarding how carbon emissions trading would be implemented at international and national levels and how afforestation and deforestation would be defined. He hoped that the Kyoto Protocol would prove to be supportive of SFM and not attempt to direct forest management.

Costa Rica: Vilma Obando outlined Costa Rica's activities in implementing the CBD since its ratification in September 1994. She noted that Costa Rica has worked toward its implementation according to the CBD's principles on the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits. She described the components of Costa Rica's national biodiversity strategy: reporting on biodiversity conservation activities in Costa Rica since 1992; reporting on the state of biodiversity in Costa Rica; and implementing

a strategy on biodiversity and integrating biodiversity into the development process. She said the goal was to have each of Costa Rica's eleven conservation areas develop its own biodiversity conservation strategy that would be sensitive to local conditions and needs. These strategies could then be used as a basis for developing a national strategy. She emphasized that several important issues must be addressed to successfully implement the CBD, such as information gaps, the impacts of social and economic activities on biodiversity, the lack of coordination among government departments, and the need for training, education and public awareness. She stressed that CBD implementation must be a participatory process that seeks to improve the quality and standard of life and must be integrated into all sectors.

Juan Rodriguez highlighted Costa Rica's experience with CITES and noted national legislation on importation and exportation of endangered flora and fauna. He noted regional coordination through CCAD and Costa Rica's flagship role in complying with CITES commitments within Central America. He highlighted collaboration with various institutions and government departments to increase capacity for implementation and to maximize financial resources.

In the ensuing discussion, one participant noted that addressing forests in several fora does not comply with the goal of a holistic approach as established at UNCED and underscored the need for focus and specificity when considering forests, given the multiplicity of forest issues. Another participant requested examples of Central American cooperation in implementing the CBD. Obando noted several GEF projects within the Central American region and remarked that cooperation is becoming increasingly open as a result of the CCAD. She said that regional cooperation should provide the basis for international cooperation. Another participant requested further elaboration on the role of forests in emissions trading. Granholm responded that uncertainty arises in implementing emissions trading at the national level because afforestation, deforestation and reforestation remain undefined and might not necessarily be tradeable activities.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

In Plenary on Tuesday afternoon, Markku Aho, Chair of the Forestry Advisers Group, made a special presentation outlining ways to integrate the NFP concept, the sector programme support approach and the forest partnership agreement concept into an effective and efficient mechanism for international cooperation. He noted that NFPs were one of the IPF's major Proposals for Action and that the IFF had stressed the need to strengthen international support for NFPs. Noting that NFPs, while carried out by national governments, require international support, Aho stated that the concept of forest partnership agreements could promote cooperation between national and international stakeholders. He identified coordinated sectoral programme support as a new method for international stakeholders to support the actions of public and private stakeholders at the national level. He attributed the success of sectoral programme support to its focus on capacity development at the central, regional and local levels and across issues while recognizing national ownership and committing national governments to establish sound policy frameworks to execute NFPs. For this purpose, Aho also proposed the creation of an international forest partnership facility for the required international financing of such programmes.

THE CRCI APPROACH

On Monday afternoon, Michael Fullerton, Canadian Expert for the CRCI, and Guido Chaves, Costa Rican Expert for the CRCI, introduced the CRCI approach to identify possible elements and work toward a consensus on the usefulness of having international arrangements and mechanisms for all types of forests. Fullerton explained that Agenda 21, the Forest Principles, the IPF Proposals for Action and the IFF's programme of work provided the basis for the approach.

Guido Chaves then outlined the five steps to be undertaken by the Initiative, explaining that the first three were to be undertaken at this meeting and the final two at the regional meetings. He said the objective of the first step was to identify a core set of international forest issues by reviewing a preliminary list of such issues provided to participants, determining whether issues were missing, adding issues of particular regional concern and extracting a manageable core set of issues. At the end of step one, he said it was expected that a core list of elements would be produced that could be treated at an international level and could guide the regional meetings. In addition, different lists that apply to specific regions could be developed at the regional meetings.

He went on to explain step two, in which the treatment of the core set of issues in existing instruments would be assessed. He introduced a template to facilitate and record the meeting's assessment by identifying whether an instrument had considered an issue and, if so, whether its treatment had been "sufficient" or "insufficient." One participant characterized the table as "limiting" because it looked for "black and white" results and emphasized that consensus may prove to be elusive on whether an instrument's treatment of an issue was sufficient.

In outlining step three, identification of issues that could potentially be advanced as elements through international instruments, Chaves encouraged the working groups to use the following criteria to guide evaluation: potential for consensus; financial issues; scientific understanding; the scale at which the issue should be addressed; the urgency of the issue; specificity to forests; importance of gap; national impact; and the value-added from treating the issue in an international instrument that deals comprehensively with all forests and forest values. Step four would aim to identify a range of LBI and NLBI options for addressing the possible elements identified in step three. He explained that the approach proposed grouping options as new LBIs, existing LBIs or existing NLBIs. He explained that the goal of step five would be to improve understanding of the legally-binding options identified in step four.

Fullerton noted that the Initiative was designed to promote and support the work of the IFF and that the approach does not require consensus but aims to collect a range of views. He explained that the Initiative was developed in response to calls at UNGASS to examine existing and possible future LBIs and remarked that the Initiative would help the CSD and the IFF in their consideration of the need for a LBI on forests. The expectation that the San José meeting would develop a core set of elements to be considered at IFF-3 was highlighted. One participant stressed the need to consider how policy dialogue would be conducted after the year 2000 and called for analysis of the international forestry regime, including areas of fragmentation, national implementation and convergence of processes at the national level.

On Monday afternoon, participants divided into four working groups and met through Thursday morning to discuss the first three steps. Following the working group discussions on each step, participants reconvened in Plenary to report their findings.

IDENTIFY A CORE SET OF INTERNATIONAL FOREST ISSUES: In this first step, participants reviewed a preliminary list of 53 issues contained in Annex A1 of the meeting documentation. The issues included: coordination of international action on forests; reform of institutions responsible for forest policy; coordination of cross-sectoral policies and programmes; financial mechanisms in support of SFM; forest investment; coordination of programmes of donors and recipients; technology transfer; capacity-building; education and training; information sharing; coordination of research; definition of SFM; development of C&I for SFM; NFPs; forest assessment, inventories, statistics and modeling; forest valuation; national reporting;

conservation of biodiversity; establishment of protected forest areas; deforestation; afforestation and reforestation; rehabilitation of fragile ecosystems; carbon storage and sequestration; mitigation of climate change effects; soil and water conservation; impact of non-forest industries; impact of pollution; forest protection against fire, insects and disease; non-timber products and services; traditional forest-related knowledge; fuelwood supply; plantations and exotic species; harvesting methodology; forest and forest products industry; international trade; market access; certification; supply and demand; consumption; economic instruments, tax policies and land tenure; cost internalization; maintenance of future development potential; employment; forest community stability; participation; gender; indigenous people's rights; protection of intellectual property rights; infrastructure development; access to capital; and rural policy.

In addition to reviewing this list, the working groups were to determine whether any issues were missing, add issues of particular regional concern, and extract a manageable core set of issues.

Working Group 1 (WG-1), facilitated by Gabriel Guardia and Rapporteur Libby Jones, discussed the step-by-step methodology and whether the exercise of identifying a core set of international forest issues could be undertaken without clear criteria. They agreed that the issues should not be prioritized without adequate criteria or more time for deeper discussion. They discussed whether the issues were of importance at the national or international level, ultimately deciding that they could not be separated as such but must be addressed at both levels. They also added several new issues to the list of 53 and attempted to group the issues into categories or functions of forests. The group identified possible clusters under which to group the issues: issues requiring international action at the multilateral level; those requiring guidance to governments; those requiring further clarification; and those that do not require international action and thus could be omitted. They also highlighted the need to assess the value-added from treatment at the international level.

WG-2, facilitated by Nuria Badilla and Rapporteur Adam Delaney, emphasized the need to ensure that there was a differentiation of commitments at all levels (national, regional and international). They also stressed the need for understanding that: there would be a consolidation of terms, concepts and definitions; Agenda 21, the Forest Principles, the IPF Proposals for Action and the Helsinki process for C&I would serve as a foundation for discussions; and the issues in Annex A1 would serve as a guide for discussions while the experts would identify issues for Category III of the IFF. They agreed that the context of issues identified would require further elaboration at the regional meetings. The group highlighted that the IPF has already built comprehensive options for clustering and that any categorization of the issues would be subject to further deliberations and steps. Regarding the list of issues, the group suggested that: global functions be reflected as part of international actions; cluster titles be general and without descriptions; references to "non-timber" products be changed to "non-wood;" and harmonization or standardization of terms would require further deliberations. The group proposed draft clusters under which the issues could be merged: cross-sectoral issues, which could include financing, coordination of institutions, education, capacity-building, technology, training and consumption; forest valuation, which could include assessment, evaluation and research and development; trade and investment issues, which could include capital, markets, certification, supply and demand and fiscal policies; and socioeconomic issues, which could include illegal trade, indigenous rights, CBD issues, gender and participation. The group also stressed that issues related to low forest cover should be included in discussions on desertification. New issues that the group identified included: land tenure/land management; renewable energy; forest protected areas; forest fires;

environmental impact assessment (EIA); watersheds and freshwater; land and governance; and infrastructure at international and national levels.

WG-3, facilitated by Álvaro Fernández González and Rapporteur Jean William Sollo, identified and added various issues to the list in Annex A1, including: illegal logging and trade; desertification; trans-boundary disputes; fire management; chemical applications including pesticides, fertilizers and fire retardants; EIA; illegal activities such as corruption; and perverse subsidies. They considered prioritizing the issues, but one participant opposed prioritization, noting that this was not the agreed method of work of the Initiative and called for freer thinking and elaboration of an inclusive rather than limited list. Several participants proposed various ways to proceed with the consideration of the issues, including: issue clusters based on the various products of forest ecosystems, including conservation, timber and recreation; identification of key issues and the interlinkages between them; and clustering issues by economic, policy and institutional topics. The Rapporteur proposed that clustering be based on the IPF framework. Several participants supported first clustering issues and then developing category titles to reflect these clusters.

WG-4, facilitated by Antonieta Camacho Soto and Rapporteur Clayton Hall, raised difficulties with the methodology. They found the list of issues too broad and disorganized. They questioned whether these issues should be addressed by a LBI and whether they sufficiently reflected the unique circumstances and needs of various countries and regions. The group proposed adding issues of governance and transparency, forest cover, monitoring and assessment activities, consumption patterns, and access to resources in addition to market access, and suggested linking the development of criteria with that of indicators for SFM. Participants attempted to group these items under separate headings as a means of identifying objectives, priorities, themes and issues. Proposed headings included SFM, forest cover, networks, compliance, sanctions and conflict settlement. It was noted that since some issues were cross-sectoral, grouping them under separate headings could compromise the interests of specific countries or communities. The group thus proposed to move away from the suggested methodology and toward activities in steps two (analyzing the level of treatment in existing instruments) and three (identifying those issues that could potentially be advanced through international instruments).

Following the WGs' presentation of their findings on step one in Plenary on Tuesday afternoon, one participant made suggestions as to how the meeting could structure the initial identification of functions and issues to be addressed. He said the issues and functions could be categorized in terms of the level of intervention (global, sub-regional or national), thematic areas, cross-sectoral issues and general environmental issues. He also suggested: addressing issues and functions that apply to all types of forests; defining what issues need to be addressed at an international level; addressing linkages and complementarities between different forest-related instruments; developing a general internationally-based framework under which such issues could be addressed; and considering the availability and provision of financial resources at various levels to implement the envisaged international instrument and institutional arrangements that would be needed. Another participant recommended focusing on crucial international aspects rather than attempting to prioritize the issues. He suggested that the goal was to establish categories to be forwarded for consideration at the international level.

Following this Plenary discussion, the WG Rapporteurs and meeting organizers convened to elaborate a proposal for further work of the meeting. Fullerton presented the proposal to the Plenary, which utilized a framework developed at IFF-2 to delineate the following categories under which to group the issues: management; conserva-

tion; sustainable development; and institutions and policy instruments. The proposed framework grouped the issues under these headings, retaining all the issues listed in Annex A1 and adding those put forward by the WGs.

One participant noted that this framework was one of two options proposed at IFF-2 as a structure for addressing Category III and inquired if the meeting would use both. Fullerton noted that only one option would be used on the basis that it was simply a previously agreed means of categorizing the issues rather than an endorsement of one option over the other.

Several speakers expressed concern with the methodology and confusion regarding the criteria to be applied in identifying issues requiring international action. They discussed whether it would be valuable to ascertain which issues should be addressed at international, regional and national levels and what the global agenda on these issues should be. One participant responded that such an exercise seemed futile. He noted the need instead for action at various levels to address many of the issues, stressing the need to examine whether the most pressing problems can be treated through existing instruments, and if not, how to better address the gaps. Another participant suggested prioritizing the issues and focusing on those that threaten forests at the international level. Another pointed out the challenges posed by attempting to prioritize the issues due to differing priorities among various parties. He emphasized the need to address all relevant issues and identify those deserving global attention. It was noted that many of the issues fall under different categories and suggested that the utility of the categories be assessed.

In Plenary on Wednesday morning, Co-Chair Luis Rojas introduced a revised methodology to address the list of issues clustered under the topics of management, conservation, sustainable development and institutions and policy instruments. One participant noted that some issues brought forth from the working groups were missing and requested adding them to the document so that all groups would address the same issues. These omitted topics included: transboundary conflict; perverse subsidies; chemical applications including pesticides, fertilizers and fire retardants; corruption; access to capital; national compliance; and economic incentives. Experts opposed clustering the issues due to the potential overlap among the categories. Thus, the effort to cluster the issues was abandoned.

ANALYZE THE LEVEL OF TREATMENT OF ISSUES IN EXISTING INSTRUMENTS: In Plenary on Wednesday morning, Michael Fullerton presented step two, analysis of the level of treatment of the issues in international instruments. He underscored that neither consensus nor debate was the objective but that participants should simply confirm whether existing international instruments addressed these issues and whether their treatment was sufficient or insufficient. This step was expected to reflect the range of expert views and facilitate the next step of identifying a set of core issues to be advanced as potential elements in an international instrument.

A participant proposed the possibility of undertaking steps two and three in tandem or instructing participants to consider the linkages between them. Co-Chair Carette stressed that a simple, mechanical approach had been chosen to better focus attention on identifying issues as elements and to avoid time-consuming debates. Two experts sought clarification of the terms "international instrument" and "treatment." One said thresholds of treatment by international instruments may differ for different types of forests. Another added that an issue may be sufficiently addressed in a regional instrument but not at the international level. She also queried whether treatment should extend to cover national implementation and compliance with an international instrument. The Plenary accepted a proposal to divide the list of issues, which had grown to 72, into four parts. Each working group was to

assess the treatment of its set of issues in international conventions, Agenda 21, the Forest Principles, the IPF Proposals for Action and international C&I processes.

WG-1 noted that a number of issues overlapped and some were too broad in scope. They stressed the need to assess whether regional C&I processes address the issues rather than focusing solely on international C&I processes. The group considered the question of sufficiency versus insufficiency to be too abstract and subjective and suggested that more guidance be given if the exercise was to be repeated in the regional meetings. They proposed expanding the scope of the discussion to explain why certain issues were insufficiently treated by existing instruments and to scrutinize whether issues were treated in depth or simply mentioned in existing instruments. The group generally found that many of the 18 issues they considered were addressed in international conventions, although not sufficiently, and were sufficiently addressed in Agenda 21, the Forest Principles and regional C&I processes. They noted that the IPF addressed most of the issues, sometimes sufficiently and sometimes insufficiently. They suggested that the treatment of issues in international institutions also be considered because, for example, the issue of forest assessment was most sufficiently addressed by FAO rather than by any existing instrument.

WG-2 concluded that approximately 90% of the issues were insufficiently treated by existing instruments while 99% had received some consideration in one instrument or another. There was an understanding that the goal was not to reach consensus but to capture the range of views. They considered the question of sufficiency on various levels (international, regional, national). They emphasized that the relationship between these issues and Category III remained open for further debate for the IFF and were merely being clarified by the WGs. They noted that treatment of certification was insufficient due to a lack of research, coordination and information sharing. They also highlighted inadequate information exchange for technology transfer and the need for a best practices model for forestry practices.

WG-3 determined whether issues were addressed by existing international agreements and, if so, whether these issues had received sufficient treatment. The experts concluded that all the issues they reviewed were treated by existing instruments, and agreed that treatment of these issues was unanimously insufficient, with the exception of a few divergent opinions on the topic of global functions. The WG took issue with determining the "sufficiency" of treatment, noting that the term was unclear. Some participants felt "sufficiency" referred to agreed commitments while others felt it also included implementation of these commitments. The Rapporteur characterized the exercise as a survey designed to draw on the experts' knowledge and to learn what has and has not been accomplished. The WG recommended that the system of clustering be better structured and called for further clarification of the approach for regional and sub-regional meetings, distribution of background documents at least two months in advance of the meetings and participation of specialists.

WG-4 considered whether issues were directly addressed by international conventions, namely the CBD and the FCCC, including the Kyoto Protocol. Participants found that less than half of these issues were treated under these instruments, although they determined that research under the CBD and dispute settlement under the FCCC did receive sufficient treatment. They deemed the consideration of voluntary codes of practice in the context of LBIs to be irrelevant and noted that private sector activities may play a role in Kyoto Protocol implementation but are not yet a part of its mechanisms. On benefit sharing under the FCCC, participants felt that evaluation depended on the level of treatment and that it is addressed under joint implementation between Parties but not within a nation. Apart from questions of sufficiency and insufficiency of treatment, the group was concerned about

the level of treatment (national, regional or international). Many participants found the methodology restrictive and recommended its reconsideration for regional workshops.

IDENTIFY ISSUES THAT COULD BE ADVANCED AS ELEMENTS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS:

In Plenary on Wednesday afternoon, Guido Chaves introduced step three. He presented the criteria laid out for the WGs to apply to determine the potential for issues to be advanced in an international instrument in the short and medium term: potential for consensus; financial issues; scientific understanding; national, regional or global scale; urgency of the issue; specificity to forests vs. cross-sectoral; importance of gap; national impact; and the value-added from treatment in an international instrument that deals comprehensively with all forests and all forest values. He recalled that the final list of possible elements that might be included in international instruments would be presented to IFF-3 and to the regional meetings.

One participant inquired whether exploring the potential of an issue to be addressed in an international instrument was the same as determining the desirability of addressing an issue in an international instrument. Fullerton responded that the objective was to discuss whether there was some potential to advance an issue in a meaningful way in the short and medium term through international instruments.

Participants reconvened in the four working groups on Wednesday afternoon to engage in discussions on step three and presented their findings in Plenary on Thursday morning.

WG-1 focused on the potential and probability for issues to be advanced by an international instrument rather than to be solved by international instruments. They noted that some of the criteria required clarification, particularly the "specificity to forests versus cross-sectoral" and the "importance of gap" criteria. Reservations were expressed on the methodology and clustering of the issues. They suggested that the terminology be more clearly defined and closer to that used in the IFF. They also recommended that some of the issues be separated and considered individually, for example, the issue listed as "deforestation/forest degradation/afforestation/reforestation/exotic species/desertification." The group noted that the issue of plantations was missing and needed to be addressed. Some participants expressed confusion regarding whether the approach was calling for consideration of the treatment of issues in "new or existing instruments" or "an international instrument" and stressed that it was the former that should be applied. The group agreed that there was value-added for treatment of all issues but stressed that this was not to be interpreted as suggesting there was value-added in their treatment in a new international instrument. They agreed that there was potential for advancement of almost all issues at the international level with the possible exception of drought, low forest cover and extent of national forest cover.

WG-2 agreed that all of the 18 issues examined had potential for advancement in both the short and medium term but that the time-frame for each issue might differ. Questions were raised on the definition of the issues. Participants felt the criteria were too extensive for application and thus employed only two of the nine criteria: the potential for consensus and the value-added from treating an issue in an international instrument. They studied the merits and drawbacks of consolidating steps two and three and suggested a review of the methodology and criteria before introducing them to the regional workshops.

In WG-3, opinions varied on the issues of coordination of international action on "forests/cooperation" and of "participation/empowerment." A key consideration was the lack of decentralization. The group also identified additional criteria for determining the potential for advancement of issues, including: social and economic conditions; the length of the time-frame necessary; the complexity of the issue; and

existing obstacles. The group identified urgency of issue, national importance, consensus potential and specificity of forests as the criteria most frequently cited when determining an issue's potential for advancement. However, the criteria on the value-added from treating the issues in an international instrument was not employed as the group felt it was perhaps premature for step three of the process. Regarding coordination of programmes of donors and recipients, the group identified a need to differentiate between investment in forestry equipment and the forest itself.

WG-4 decided that issues for advancement in the short or medium term were access to capital, land use, forest policy implementation, benefit sharing, cross-border effects, dispute settlement and research. The group also suggested merging some related issues for advancement, such as combining forest policy implementation with NFPs and soil and water conservation. They noted that governance could be advanced but recommended that its definition be fleshed out, for example, by including concepts of clean government, transparency, accountability and a participatory approach recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Integrated land-use planning was recommended for advancement, but skepticism was expressed because its inclusion in existing international instruments to date had produced disappointing results and thus emphasizing it in a regional agreement might prove more productive. One participant suggested an additional criterion: the extent to which the attainment of SFM in all types of forests is hindered or advanced. It was noted that the methodology was too rigid to allow in-depth exploration of issues and consideration of other types of instruments.

Following the WG presentations of their findings on step three to the Plenary, a number of participants stressed that the meeting was intended to analyze whether the issues could be advanced through international instruments rather than a new instrument in particular. Concern was expressed regarding the scope of definition of some of the issues and whether this scope was leading the process in a particular direction. Fullerton responded that the approach was issue-driven and not intended to suggest any particular course of action. He highlighted the value in considering synergies by associating issues with a broader array of elements.

Co-Chair Carette noted that the quality of discussion at the upcoming regional meetings would be facilitated if the list of issues could be shortened by clustering or modifying the wording of some and merging them. He emphasized that this would not reduce the quality of assessment or imply any prioritization but would lend structure to discussions. He also suggested that it would be beneficial to consider the possibility of combining steps two and three, since the identification of core issues implies that some potential exists to address them comprehensively in any type of international instrument or arrangement. This would also allow more time to discuss the justifications of how and why experts think these issues should be addressed and to explore whether there are commonalities.

A number of experts expressed concern with the methodology of the approach. One disapproved of the process of voting, as undertaken by some of the WGs, and recommended that the range of experts' views be captured instead and presented to the IFF, which is the appropriate political arena to decide how to proceed.

One participant highlighted the gaps in international instruments, particularly the CBD, in recognizing and defending the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples and stressed that any future instrument must take these into account.

GUIDANCE FOR REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

On Thursday afternoon, following the Plenary's discussion of step three, participants moved to the agenda item on guidance for regional and sub-regional consultations, in which they reviewed the proposed approach.

Noting challenges encountered at the meeting, one participant expressed concern over how the regional meetings would be able to address all of the issues identified at the experts' meeting and accomplish the final steps of the approach. She identified potential obstacles that might be encountered at regional meetings, including a lack of background information on international forest issues, illiteracy and language barriers in terms of bridging the gap between Western and other thought processes. Several participants supported this statement, noting that national and sub-national participants might find this methodology too restrictive, imposing and incomprehensible due to linguistic and cultural barriers. One participant added that building consensus with such a systematic and organized methodology could ignore realities, stifle expression and generate negative feelings. Noting that connecting international forest policy to real people is a major challenge, one participant remarked that the Initiative could produce real creativity in the next stages of regional consultations by drawing on experiences with implementation "from the ground."

Another participant inquired as to how regional issues fit into the scheme of the Initiative and noted that, for example, gaps at the international level may not exist at the national level. Concern was expressed about the emphasis placed on a global instrument over regional instruments. Co-Chair Carette said the regional meetings were intended to clarify regional concerns and identify instruments that could be used to address issues. He suggested that instead of clustering issues, perhaps "what the forest needs" should be considered, and underscored that the Initiative was not directed toward one specific outcome.

One participant delivered an NGO statement on behalf of the Environmental Investigation Agency, the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests, the International Indian Treaty Council, the Global Forest Policy Project, Greenpeace International, a Mexican women's NGO and Sobrevivencia-Friends of the Earth Paraguay. The statement noted that NGOs came to San José with hopes for fruitful dialogue to identify actions required to improve protection, conservation, recovery and sustainable development of forests within existing international instruments and that they came with open minds to hear the views of those hoping for a convention. They hoped the meeting would provide an opportunity to initiate thorough and comprehensive discussion on key areas, including: recognition of the traditional knowledge of local communities and indigenous peoples' rights; protection and safety of forest workers; conservation of biological diversity; prevention of illegal trade; improvement of the quality of international financial and technical assistance; cross-sectoral linkages; improved forest mapping, inventories and monitoring; and improved enforcement mechanisms and political commitment. It expressed disappointment that these important issues had not been addressed and that the "imposed" methodology prevented productive discussion on the world's most critical forest issues. It noted that the determination of a few to develop a new global convention on forests was hampering necessary debate on pressing forest issues. He requested that the statement be annexed to the report. Co-Chair Carette responded that a wide range of stakeholders had been invited to participate in developing the methodology and lamented that they had not taken advantage of this opportunity. The NGO representative expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to participate and hoped that the opinions expressed in the statement would be taken into account.

Another participant drew attention to a seeming misconception that San José had nuances of a political debate when the Initiative had aimed to set the political debate aside. He said that coming to the meeting with presupposed ideas constituted a personal failure on the part of the experts to contribute to the meeting. He opposed annexing the NGO statement as it would be unfair to others who would likewise wish to attach an annex. It was agreed that aspects of the statement would be reflected in the report of the meeting.

One participant stressed the importance of the CRCI as the only initiative that had emerged to address Category III's mandate to identify possible elements and further actions to be taken and expressed concern regarding the short time-frame of the regional workshops. He recommended that the methodology be as flexible as possible to allow expression of ideas at the regional meetings.

One participant proposed a simplified and revised three-step methodology for the CRCI in regional workshops, in which participants could be asked to: identify reasons behind non-SFM with open-ended questions and facilitators' support; examine whether these reasons could be addressed in an international arrangement; and decide whether existing LBIs, NLBIs or a new LBI could best address obstacles to SFM. He suggested inviting speakers to inform participants on developments in the forestry regime. He cautioned against the use of a predetermined list of issues and structured forms to avoid rigidity and allow for more informed results.

On this proposal, the value of examining whether causes of non-SFM could be addressed in any form of international arrangement was questioned since most issues were already addressed by some existing instrument or agreement. One participant said that identifying what actually happens on the ground was more useful and that regional consultations should aim to uncover these realities rather than simply evaluating the impact of international agreements. He urged the use of independent expert evaluations of existing agreements as a basis for work and to ensure that participants are adequately briefed prior to the regional processes.

Another participant stressed that the regional consultations be technical rather than political. He underscored that consensus should be built on respect for differences and diversity of viewpoints to make the process open, transparent and participatory. He further suggested that involvement of international organizations, governments and international cooperation agencies could facilitate this process at the national and sub-national levels.

It was recommended that the regional meetings be structured to elicit views and suggestions on how to overcome obstacles to SFM and involve all stakeholders, including native peoples, governments and multilateral development banks.

Several experts supported holding workshops prior to the regional meetings. One participant emphasized that the Initiative was not starting from scratch and that it should build on consensus achieved in Agenda 21, the Forest Principles and the IPF Proposals for Action. He stressed the need to build consensus on implementing the IPF Proposals for Action prior to going beyond them. He recommended that the regional meetings examine how to attract political support to implement the Proposals for Action and explore how to do so by drawing from existing agreements. He added that the regional meetings could also focus on the threats to forests, re-examine the agreed principles in this context, agree on general commitments and assess why the Proposals for Action have not been implemented thus far. Another participant emphasized that the time to address the question of instruments was pressing and that the process must be focused and productive.

FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED FOR BUILDING CONSENSUS BETWEEN MARCH 1999-FEBRUARY 2000

In Plenary on Thursday afternoon, Guido Chaves asked participants to comment on action required or issues to be taken into consideration throughout the duration of the Initiative. One participant noted that maintaining open lines of communication and providing updates on the work of the Initiative would be helpful and suggested that a meeting to do so be held at IFF-3. Another highlighted several meetings relevant to forests on the horizon as additional opportunities to share information. One participant requested more details on the meeting to take place in November 1999 in Canada. Fullerton responded that the envisioned final objective of the meeting was to gather and compile information from the regional meetings and noted that the date in November was tentative. In response to inquiries regarding the locations proposed for the regional meetings, Patricia Chaves said the following countries had offered to host meetings: Malaysia; Ecuador; Argentina; Spain; Zimbabwe; Cameroon; and Turkey. She noted that offers to host meetings were still being accepted and that efforts were being made to hold meetings in locations where representatives from all countries could participate.

CLOSING PLENARY

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Costa Rican Vice-Minister of Environment and Energy, opened the final Plenary session by expressing appreciation for the experts' hard work and participation and the Secretariat for its tireless efforts in organizing the meeting and preparing the meeting report.

Fullerton introduced the report of the meeting to the Plenary. The report contains an introduction, which outlines the background of the Initiative, the agenda covered by the meeting, the five steps of the Initiative's approach and the formation and procedures of the four working groups. The report highlights the special presentations made on general concepts and terms of international instruments, the Central American experience in developing its regional convention on forests and lessons learned from implementation of existing instruments. It provides highlights of the WG and Plenary discussions on identifying a core set of international forest issues (step one), assessing their treatment in existing international instruments (step two) and identifying issues that could potentially be addressed through international instruments (step three). It also highlights the Plenary discussions on guidance for the regional and sub-regional consultations and review of the proposed approach and on further action required for building consensus from March 1999-February 2000. The following annexes are also attached: a list of meeting participants; a list of WG Rapporteurs and facilitators; a description of the five-step approach of the Initiative; the initial list of international forest issues used as a basis for discussions on step one; the list of criteria applied in step two to determine the potential for issues to be advanced in an international instrument; a list of criteria for assessing the pros and cons of legally-binding options; lists of the core set of issues used during WG sessions and revised by the WG and Plenary discussions; a template outlining the WGs' findings on the treatment of the issues in international instruments; and a table summarizing the WGs' findings on the potential for advancement of the issues in international instruments.

The floor was opened for comments on the report. Experts observed that the report did not note that it was only a draft report. On the introductory section, one participant suggested that texts referring to the identification of possible elements and work toward a consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms also specify the consideration of options other than a LBI on all types of forests. Another participant called for consideration and participation of indigenous peoples in the Initiative and recommended consultation of documents on the rights of indigenous peoples. There were requests for

additions to reflect participants' criticisms on the overall methodology and the criteria for evaluating issues for advancement in an international instrument.

Regarding text noting the proposed classification of issues under "management, conservation, sustainable development and institutions and policy instruments," it was suggested to add that neither this classification, "nor a core set of issues," was adopted. It was proposed that the report's list of main categories be noted to have enjoyed support rather than "shared general consensus." One participant highlighted dissent as to whether the list of issues should form the basis for regional meetings and proposed deleting this reference. Another proposed that the list "could be used" for future regional meetings.

One participant suggested noting that not only time constraints but also limitations imposed by the template hindered experts from explaining their opinions on the degree of treatment of the issues. Regarding the report's summation of the NGO statement on the CRCI approach, the NGO representative requested that it reflect that these and other views were expressed in a written joint statement.

On guidance for regional meetings, experts proposed adding that regional meetings should seek balance in participation of technical and political views and that countries should hold their own country seminars prior to the regional meetings. Fullerton explained that the Steering Committee had discussed producing a meeting plan that could inform the regional meeting hosts and participants how a simplified approach might be used, emphasizing that there is no best way to do so but that this plan could be taken into account in planning the regional meetings. It could suggest adding a day before the start of each meeting for a general briefing. He noted 1 April 1999 as the deadline for completion of the simplified approach and for meeting plans for the regional meetings.

It was proposed that the report note how the amendments suggested in the closing Plenary would be taken into account. One participant suggested a notation clarifying that the annex describing the approach used at the meeting would be revised and was not intended for use at the regional meetings. One participant requested inserting a chronological explanation of the development of the two versions of the "core set of issues" annexed to the report. Another requested that the annexes detailing the results of the working groups be footnoted to clarify that not all issues were considered by all experts. Bergeron noted that the revised report of the meeting would be available at <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/cfs/crc>.

Vice-Minister Rodriguez remarked that consensus signifies respect, justice, equity and respect for others opinions. He expressed satisfaction in taking part in the Initiative and hoped its results would be fruitful. He also emphasized the importance of resource management for addressing poverty and called for increased communication between the international and national levels. An expert speaking on behalf of experts from the EU and associated countries noted the apparent simplicity of forests as being deceptive. He hoped that the methodology elaborated in San José and to be furthered at regional meetings would facilitate a comprehensive debate and provide guidance for forests after the year 2000. He thanked participants, organizers and interpreters for their contributions.

IFF Co-Chair Asadi described the meeting as educational and fruitful. He remarked that it was complemented by lively debate and rich and enlightening conversations that resulted in an increased collective understanding of ideas on Category III. He said the diverse array of views at the meeting seemed to make an intrinsically difficult topic more cumbersome but permitted soul-searching on the topic. He noted that the Initiative had achieved its mission but that the "hot potato" would now be sent to IFF-3. He looked forward to continuing

discussion on Category III at IFF-3 with delegates who would be prepared and possess the political will to promote consensus on all agenda topics, including Category III.

In closing remarks, Fullerton noted that the meeting had permitted everyone opportunity to express a wide range of views and that comments made would be taken into account when reshaping the approach for the regional meetings. He said that the Initiative would continue to be a learning experience through personal exchange and expansion of the available information base.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

14th SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY:

The 14th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) will be held from 1-5 March 1999 in Rome, Italy. A Ministerial Meeting on Sustainability Issues in Forestry, the National and International Challenges, will follow COFO on 8-9 March 1999. The Ministerial Meeting will provide a forum for global decision on strategic and policy issues related to forestry.

The Ministerial Meeting will discuss, *inter alia*, the need for international instruments to support sustainable forest development; global action to address forest fires; and the proposed FAO Strategic Framework for the years 2000-2015. For more information contact: Forestry Department FAO/SDRN, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100, Rome, Italy; Tel.: +39-06-57054778; Fax: +39-06-57052151; E-mail: Forestry-www@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/FAOINFO/FORESTRY/forestry.htm>.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON PROTECTED FOREST AREAS: This expert meeting, co-sponsored by Brazil and the US, will be held 15-19 March 1999 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. For information contact: Joy Berg, US Forest Service; Tel: +1-202-273-4727; E-mail: j.berg@if.arctic.com; or Braulio Dias, Brazil Ministry of Environment; Tel: +55-61-317-1260; E-mail: bfsdias@mma.gov.br.

SEMINAR ON PRACTICAL TRADE-RELATED ASPECTS OF SFM: This seminar, sponsored by Brazil in cooperation with UNCTAD, ITTO and the IFF Secretariat, is tentatively scheduled for 6-8 April 1999 in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information contact: David Elliott, UNCTAD; e-mail: david.elliott@unctad.org; or Maria Nazareth Farani Azevedo, Brazilian Mission to the United Nations, Geneva; Tel: +41-22-929-0913; Fax: +41-22-788-2506; E-mail: lele@itu.ch.

THIRD SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS: IFF-3 will be held in Geneva from 3-14 May 1999. For more information, contact: the IFF Secretariat, Two UN Plaza, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10017 USA; Tel: +1-212-963-6208; Fax: +1-212-963-3463; E-mail: hurtubia@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/iff.htm>.

RAMSAR COP-7: The 7th Ramsar COP is scheduled for San José, Costa Rica from 10 - 18 May 1999, and will mark the first time that a Ramsar COP has been convened in a developing country. Also for the first time, the 7th COP will focus on the interrelations between human societies and wetland habitats. The general theme will be "People and Wetlands - The Vital Link." Information can be found at http://w3.iprolink.ch/iucnlib/themes/ramsar/index_cop7.htm. For more information contact: the Ramsar Convention Bureau, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland; Tel +41-22-999-0170; Fax +41-22-999-0169; E-mail: ramsar@hq.iucn.org; Internet: <http://w3.iprolink.ch/iucnlib/themes/ramsar/>.

26th SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL: The ITTC's next meeting will be held from 28 May-3 June 1999 in Chang-Mai, Thailand. For more information contact: International Organizations Center, 5th Floor, Pacifico-Yoko-

hama, 1-1-1, Minato-Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama, 220 Japan; Tel: +81-45-223-1111; Fax: +81-45-223-1110; E-mail: Itto@mail.itto-UNET.ocn.ne.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL: The second General Assembly of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) will be held 23-28 June 1999 in Oaxaca, Mexico. For more information contact: Timothy Synnott, Forest Stewardship Council, Avenida Hidalgo 502, 68000 Oaxaca, Mexico; Tel: +52-951-46905; Fax: +52-951-4690563244; E-mail: fscsoax@fscsoax.org; Internet: <http://www.fscsoax.org/>.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' MEETING ON LOW FOREST COVER COUNTRIES: An Open-ended International Experts' Meeting on "Special Needs and Requirements of Developing Countries with Low Forest Cover and Unique Types of Forests" is tentatively scheduled for August 1999 in Tehran, Iran. The meeting is organized by the Government of Iran, in cooperation with other interested countries and international organizations. For more information contact: Mohsen Esperri, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN, 622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10017 USA; Tel: +1-212-687-2020; Fax +1-212-867-7086; E-mail: mesperi@un.int; or Shamse-din Shariat Nejad, Head of Iranian High Council on Forests, Ministry of Jihad Sazandegi (Rural Development), Tehran, Iran; Tel: +98-21-244-6505/244-6537; Fax: +98-21-244-6551; E-mail: Desert@Mavara.com.

THE 42nd MEETING OF THE CITES STANDING COMMITTEE: The 42nd Meeting of the CITES Standing Committee will take place in South Africa in September 1999. For more information contact: the CITES Secretariat; Tel: +41-22-917-8139; Fax: +41-22-797-3417; E-mail: cites@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.mwcmc.org.uk/CITES>.

COSTA RICA-CANADIA INITIATIVE: Regional consultations for the CRCI are tentatively scheduled for: June in Malaysia; July in Zimbabwe; September in Ecuador, Cameroon and Spain; and October in Argentina and Turkey. No date has yet been set for a regional meeting in Mexico. The final meeting of the Initiative is tentatively scheduled for November 1999 in Canada. For information contact: Guido Chaves, MINAE-SINAC, Apdo. 10104-1000, San José, Costa Rica; Tel: +506-283-7654; Fax: +506-283-7118; E-mail: guidocha@ns.minae.go.cr; or Michael Fullerton, Policy, Planning and International Affairs Branch, Canadian Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, 580 Booth Street, 8th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0E4; Tel: +1-613-943-5258; Fax: +1-613-947-9033; E-mail: mfullert@nrcan.gc.ca. Also see the CRCI website at: <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/cfs/crc>.