



**SUMMARY OF THE UNFF COUNTRY-LED
INITIATIVE ON MONITORING, ASSESSMENT
AND REPORTING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
IPF/IFF PROPOSALS FOR ACTION:
17-20 MARCH 2003**

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Country-Led Initiative on Lessons Learned in Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on Implementation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action convened in Viterbo, Italy, from 17-20 March 2003. Bringing together 100 participants from 51 countries, representing governments, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the initiative focused on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) on the implementation of Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) Proposals for Action (PFAs), particularly in relation to combating deforestation and forest degradation. The meeting was co-sponsored by Brazil, China, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States and supported by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UNFF Secretariat.

Participants convened in Plenary and working group sessions to discuss questions regarding approaches to monitoring and PFA implementation, stakeholder collaboration to improve country capacity to monitor, assess and report, and assessment of countries' relations with the UNFF. Their conclusions and recommendations will be forwarded to the third session of the UNFF, which will convene in Geneva, Switzerland, from 26 May to 6 June 2003.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNFF

In October 2000, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), in Resolution E/2000/35, established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) as a subsidiary body with the main objective of promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The UNFF succeeded a five-year period (1995-2000) of forest policy dialogue facilitated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). To achieve its main objective, the following principal functions were identified for the UNFF: to facilitate implementation of forest-related agreements and foster a common under-

standing on sustainable forest management; to provide for continued policy development and dialogue among Governments, international organizations, including major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, as well as to address forest issues and emerging areas of concern in a holistic, comprehensive and integrated manner; to enhance cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues; to foster international cooperation and to monitor, assess and report on progress of the above functions and objectives; and to strengthen political commitment to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The IPF/IFF processes produced a body of more than 270 proposals for action towards sustainable forest management, known collectively as the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. These proposals are the basis for the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) and Plan of Action, various themes of which are discussed at annual UNFF sessions. Country- and Organization-led initiatives also contribute to the development of UNFF themes. By 2005, the UNFF will consider recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. It will also take steps to devise approaches towards appropriate financial and technology transfer support to enable implementation of sustainable forest management.

UNFF MEETINGS: The UNFF organizational session and informal consultations on the MYPOW took place from 12-16 February 2001, in New York. At the organizational session, delegates agreed that the UNFF Secretariat would be located in New York. Delegates also addressed progress towards the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and on the duration of Bureau members' terms.

The first session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-1) took place from 11-23 June 2001, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates discussed and adopted decisions on the UNFF's MYPOW, a Plan of Action for the implementation of PFAs, and the initiation of the UNFF's work with the CPF. They also recommended the establishment of three *ad hoc* expert groups to provide technical advice to the UNFF on: MAR approaches and mechanisms; finance and transfer of ESTs; and consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

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The second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-2) took place from 4-15 March 2002, at UN Headquarters in New York. The outcomes of UNFF-2 included a Ministerial Declaration and Message to the WSSD and eight decisions on: combating deforestation and forest degradation; forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems; rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover; rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests; concepts, terminology and definitions; specific criteria for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests; proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 2002-2005; and other matters.

REPORT OF THE UNFF COUNTRY-LED INITIATIVE

The UNFF Country-Led Initiative, co-chaired by Paolo Vicentini (Italy) and Stephanie Caswell (US), commenced during a Plenary session on Monday, 17 March, during which participants heard an expert panel discussion on country experiences in monitoring and assessing implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action. Participants then divided into three working groups from Monday, 17 March, to Wednesday, 19 March, to discuss three questions regarding approaches to monitoring and PFA implementation; stakeholder collaboration to improve country capacity to monitor, assess and report; and assessment of countries' relations with the UNFF. The meeting also included two informal panel sessions that addressed stakeholder experiences with monitoring and assessing implementation of IPF/IFF PFAs and streamlining forest-related reporting, and a field trip to a local forest. A closing Plenary session met on Thursday, 20 March, to consider and adopt final conclusions and recommendations.

OPENING CEREMONY

Marco Mancini, Rector, Tuscia University, Italy, welcomed delegates to Viterbo's historic university and the inauguration of its newly restored Plenary Hall. He highlighted the University's strong commitment to scientific research, particularly on forestry issues.

Giuseppe Di Croce, Director-General, Corpo Forestale, stressed the importance of stakeholder cooperation on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) and the need for a legally binding tool for the management of sustainable forests.

Ervedo Giordano, Forestry Professor, Tuscia University, noted the growing importance of forestry courses within the University's faculty of agriculture, adding that forest engineers and technicians are needed to address the country's deforestation problems. Stefano Grego, Pro-Rector, Tuscia University, introduced the University's Roman Forum initiative, which emphasizes a holistic approach to environmental management and sustainable development.

Hosny El-Lakany, Assistant Director-General for Forestry, FAO, and Chairman of the CPF, said that monitoring, assessment and reporting on PFA implementation is one of the most crucial functions of the UNFF. He announced that the CPF produced a website for posting all national reports on all forest-related processes. Pekka Petosaari, UNFF Secretariat, called on delegates to clarify why it is important that countries monitor, assess and report on PFA implementation and how to build more efficiently national capacity for MAR. Concenção Ferreira,

Portuguese Forestry Directorate-General, stressed the importance of intersessional initiatives as means to support UNFF deliberations and identified MAR as one of the key areas.

OPENING PLENARY

On Monday, 17 March, delegates met in an afternoon panel discussion, chaired by Stephanie Caswell (US), to discuss country experiences with MAR in relation to combating desertification and forest degradation.

Mike Dudley, UK Forestry Commission, outlined the meeting's scope and objectives. Identifying UNFF as the institutional context of the meeting, he noted three aspects of MAR: progress and implementation of PFA, progress and implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM), and review of the UNFF's effectiveness. He stressed that the focus of this meeting is on MAR and the implementation of PFAs related to deforestation and forest degradation, and said the meeting's two objectives are sharing lessons learned in MAR and identifying ways to share information with UNFF.

Several participants questioned why the focus is on deforestation and not the sustainable forest management of all types of forests, while another suggested discussing monitoring the causes of deforestation. Dudley replied that PFAs comprise a wide range of issues and reiterated that the focus of this meeting is PFA implementation. Chair Caswell said the meeting's report would be an official document listing recommendations on facilitating UNFF's progress in PFA implementation. One developing country participant pointed out that some countries could not discuss monitoring and reporting on implementation because they have not begun taking action. The Chair responded that learning about the experience of other countries may help start action on implementation.

Tamer Otrakcier, Turkish Forestry General-Directorate, discussed Turkey's MAR experience, noting that most forests are under state-control and that forestry laws fall under the Turkish constitution. Although deforestation and forest degradation are not considered major problems in Turkey, he said the Forestry Ministry and the Forestry General-Directorate monitor existing forest-related threats, particularly agricultural expansion, grazing and pest and diseases. He added that new mechanisms, including *ad hoc* committees, commissions, advisory boards and voluntary groups, have been established to improve IPF/IFF implementation, however these mechanisms are still weak as participation is low and actors lack knowledge about the process. He also said one of the main obstacles to effective MAR is the lack of a well-defined system with well-defined procedures, and that there was a weakness in verifying procedures that ensure the collection of reliable and accurate information. Otrakcier concluded by highlighting several areas for UNFF improvement including: establishing a uniform MAR system; enhancing involvement in the CPF; facilitating access to country experiences; and involving high-level national planning units in the process.

Tasso Rezende de Azevedo, Brazilian Environment Ministry, spoke on Brazil's experience in monitoring and assessing the country's 570 million hectares of forests and a forest industry that is responsible for 8% of GDP and 4% of exports. He said that deforestation is a serious problem, caused by infrastructure development (i.e. roads and dams), logging, land clearing for agriculture and ranching, and forest fires.

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However, several programmes have been developed to improve the situation, including the implementation of a national Environmental Impact Assessment; a national network of permanent forest plots; a forest cover monitoring system for tropical forests; monitoring and assessment of forest fires to identify risk areas; and the Amazon Surveillance System. He said future challenges include the need to: expand forest monitoring in dry forest areas, which comprise 100 million hectares; develop community fire control teams; implement a system to identify logging activities using GIS technologies; implement a nation-wide forest inventory; and develop an information system for forest industry and forest products market.

Linda Hedlund, Swedish Ministry of Industry, outlined Sweden's experience in MAR of forest resources and described her country's national forest inventory. She summarized the lessons learned, including: high costs of monitoring; a need to rely on monitoring on the ground rather than remote sensing; and difficulty in assessing policy effects on forests. Stressing the need for long-term monitoring, she said political commitment needs to be sustained by focusing on usable information that helps investment and facilitates decision-making.

Peter Holmgren, FAO Forestry Department, discussed the global Forest Resources Assessments (FRA) and announced plans to harmonize FRA with policy processes such as the climate change process. He said remote sensing is insufficient for capturing all aspects of forest resources and their use and stressed that global assessments are sums of national assessments and require close collaboration with countries. He added that most countries lack adequate information and called for strengthening MAR.

Two delegates noted that some presentations addressed monitoring of forest resources and not monitoring PFA implementation. Responding to a question regarding financial resources, panelists clarified that some policy projects are funded by national funds and others by international ones. A developing country participant said the necessity for long-term monitoring conflicts with the short-term need for information and action.

WORKING GROUPS

Participants divided equally into three working groups from Monday, 17 March, to Wednesday, 19 March. Working Group I was chaired by Peter Csoka (Hungary) and the Rapporteur was Linda Hedlund (Sweden). Working Group II was chaired by Linda Mossop (South Africa) and the Rapporteur was Ed Brown (US). Working Group III was chaired by Jan McAlpine (US) and the Rapporteur was Mike Fullerton (Canada). Each group considered the same three questions, which were formulated by the meeting's organizing committee. Following discussion on each issue, the groups reported their deliberations in brief Plenary sessions.

QUESTION 1: WHAT APPROACHES TO MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR ACTION DO YOU USE AND WHICH ONES ARE MOST HELPFUL?

Working Group I: Delegates in this working group described a wide range of methods applied to monitoring PFA implementation, including through national forest programmes (NFPs) and other government reports. Others noted that PFAs were a good reference point for

guiding policy implementation, but difficulties were found in translating PFAs to reflect current national conditions. National forest inventories and criteria and indicators (C&I) were also seen as efficient tools for collecting and disseminating information, and some said that monitoring PFA is an effective tool for priority setting. Several delegates also stressed the need for additional legal and financial support for monitoring and implementation and said that changing priorities make evaluation difficult. Other conclusions included: transparency and participation are key to future success but difficult to achieve; new and innovative methods are needed to obtain information; national conflicts in land use cause problems; and cross-sectoral coordination needs to be considered.

Working Group II: This working group discussed how countries define monitoring, assessment and reporting. Delegates defined "monitoring" as a means of: following-up, tracking changes, serving as a basis for improvement or change, and information collecting. Some delegates stressed that monitoring should be done by government agencies, as well as by NGOs, special interest groups, certification bodies, local communities and independent third parties (i.e. scientists, researchers and consultants). Public-private partnerships were also highlighted as a useful mechanism for monitoring implementation of specific PFAs or for monitoring at the national or regional level. "Assessment" was defined as: evaluating the level of commitment; setting priorities; analyzing monitoring results; checking against standards of performance; and providing a "reality check" on internal capacities. One delegate stressed that assessment should be the first step in determining which PFAs are relevant to national circumstances. "Reporting" involved determining whom to report to, including political figures (ministers), the public, internally within organizations, international organizations and stakeholders. Others stressed the need to lessen a country's reporting burden, the need to develop C&I for improved evaluation and to increase SFM awareness.

Working Group III: This working group debated the connection between national policy actions and the implementation of PFAs. Many delegates noted that governments take actions not explicitly connected to the PFAs and all agreed that every country needs to prioritize selectively which PFAs to address. Several developing country participants noted that their governments place emphasis on action and not on MAR. Participants listed various achievements in their countries, including reforestation programs, civil society participation, addressing illegal deforestation, NFPs, certification, forest resources inventories, and protected areas. One delegate questioned the need to report implementation of PFAs. Another participant responded that governments have a responsibility to domestic stakeholders to report on forest management even if MAR is not useful internationally. Some said that translating the PFAs into their local languages is an expensive and arduous process that impedes PFA implementation as well as MAR. Many called for streamlining and harmonizing MAR for the sake of efficiency and cost reduction. A delegate suggested that assessments be conducted by a third party because not everyone may trust government reports. One European country delegate said that, in their recently decentralized system of governance, MAR is conducted by regional authorities.

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Chair McAlpine summarized, *inter alia*, the following conclusions: the costs of MAR can be overwhelming for some governments; reporting should be streamlined and harmonized to reduce costs; proposals are not translated in all languages; and, given national differences in institutions, resources and development, countries need to prioritize their actions and choose which actions to report.

QUESTION 2: IDENTIFY BEST OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC, PRIVATE, NGO, BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION TO BUILD COUNTRY CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY TO MONITOR, ASSESS AND REPORT

Working Group I: The group came to the following conclusions, *inter alia*: PFAs need to be considered in relation to national policy and local needs; capacity for monitoring in many countries needs to be strengthened; and harmonization of reporting is key to success. On cooperation and partnerships, participants noted, *inter alia*, that: regional cooperation can help in monitoring PFAs; industry, the private sector and NGOs are important in collaborative partnerships to strengthen capacity; and cross-sectoral approaches are needed to highlight forests on the political agenda of sustainable development.

Working Group II: Chair Mossop began the discussion by asking the group to brainstorm on the difficulties countries have with MAR coordination. Participants noted, *inter alia*, the following challenges: lack of internal communication between national agencies and departments; conflicting systems of data collection between agencies; lack of C&I for forest policy processes; and lack of awareness on the PFA process at the local level. Others expressed concerns about the lack of financial and human resources, and lack of time to complete reports or focus on a particular monitoring task, which may also limit the opportunities for collaboration with stakeholders. Some participants noted problems associated with the lack of capacity building and continuity of professionals who understand the process and the issues.

The group then discussed options for improved collaboration with the private sector, NGOs, and at the bilateral and regional level. There was agreement that governments need to demonstrate the value of the MAR process to private sector interests and to provide a means of private sector feedback to keep them engaged. Delegates also highlighted the importance of forest certification processes and early stakeholder engagement with the MAR process, as well as the establishment of codes of conduct as a confidence building measure between government and private sectors. Participants noted that NGOs can: play an important role in creating leverage with political actors; provide a valuable source of feedback and critique; provide stakeholder information on local experiences; and contribute data and policy ideas. On bilateral cooperation, technical exchange visits and training assistance were stressed, and at the regional level many agreed that there was a need for more information sharing and outreach on MAR and forestry issues.

Working Group III: In this working group delegates stressed the need to establish cross-sectoral collaborative processes at national and international levels, domestic coordination and streamlining of reporting, and technology transfer with respect to monitoring. One participant suggested setting up independent domestic organizations to facilitate MAR and stakeholder participation. Several experts stressed government responsibility and accountability and called for report transparency. Some said that governments find it difficult to attract

stakeholder participation in MAR, with some noting the need to stress how participation can benefit civil society. A developed country delegate said his government demands rather than offers stakeholder participation. The group agreed that there is no single formula and that each country should choose among the various options for facilitating collaboration.

A number of delegates described existing national mechanisms for civil society input in decision-making, including the use of federal councils, regional councils, and consultative commissions. One participant noted that in some developing countries the problem is the small number of NGOs rather than their access to government. Others stressed the high cost of facilitating stakeholder participation and the need for NGO training. An NGO representative called for systematic use of independent reports by civil society and proposed that final government reports include sections on civil society perspectives. Some responded that governments have to validate NGO reports.

Rapporteur Fullerton highlighted the following conclusions: a rich variety of approaches to collaborative MAR are being used in different countries; there is a need to streamline MAR in order to improve consultation and reduce costs and "stakeholder fatigue;" stakeholders in some countries are less interested in MAR than in implementation; and high costs pose obstacles to collaborative MAR and consultative processes.

QUESTION 3: IN LIGHT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE MONITORING AND ASSESSING PFA IMPLEMENTATION, HOW COULD THE UNFF FACILITATE IMPROVED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PFAS THROUGH MAR?; HOW CAN COUNTRIES MOST EFFECTIVELY MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE UNFF?; AND HOW CAN UNFF SESSIONS BE STRUCTURED TO CAPITALIZE ON INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE BY COUNTRIES?

Working Group I: In Working Group I, a representative of the UNFF Secretariat described the process of reporting to the UNFF and delegates discussed the usefulness of the presently used format. In their conclusions, the group agreed on several points including: information reported at international fora needs to be presented clearly; international organizations need to make better use of the reports; actors must see the benefit of reporting; and MAR and C&I are related and have to be addressed together. In addition, delegates recommended stimulating regional cooperation in dissemination and discussion of information, and harmonizing reporting related to different policy processes.

Working Group II: Chair Mossop opened the discussion by asking how the UNFF can best serve member countries. Participants suggested that the UNFF take the initiative to provide a flexible format and guidance for reporting, provide incentives to encourage reporting (one delegate noted that only 22 out of some 170 UNFF member States have submitted their national reports on implementation of PFAs), include an agenda item to evaluate progress on PFAs, and publish a timetable for the report cycle. Many felt that the submission of reports is itself an indicator of success, but the usefulness depends on what countries report on, while others noted that reports serve as benchmarks to measure progress of PFA implementation and that UNFF-3 should review benchmarks from UNFF-1 and UNFF-2. The group also agreed that the UNFF should play a more active role in disseminating informa-

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tion and that side events, working groups and field trips are an important resource for this information exchange and should have a more prominent role in the UNFF process. Despite some criticism about the effectiveness of the UNFF, one participant stressed that the process will always require high-level meetings to raise the profile of forest issues. Another participant noted that the UNFF could be a useful venue for high-level discussion on emerging issues that affect forests beyond IPF/IFF and PFA implementation, and that inter-sessional meetings could also be used to raise new agenda issues.

Working Group III: Regarding options for the UNFF to facilitate PFA implementation through MAR, several delegates said the UNFF should clarify the purpose of reporting and its benefits for countries. One participant complained that the UNFF Secretariat does not always make internationally available the national reports it receives. Others said the UNFF and the CPF should provide training and financial resources for implementation. Proposals included: that the CPF provide financial resources to countries; that the UNFF intensify efforts to streamline reporting requirements, establish technical standards for information, and provide technical and financial incentives to identify gaps in implementation; and that the UNFF host workshops and country-led initiatives to enhance understanding of implementation.

Regarding ways to make country information available to the UNFF, delegates proposed an international database of national reports on implementation that follow a standard format. Some noted absence of information and lack of institutional capacity to meet reporting requirements.

With regard to the structure of UNFF sessions, the group agreed that they provide good opportunities to share information and increase the dialogue between stakeholders at the international level. Some participants proposed that UNFF sessions include segments for discussing national approaches to implementation, analysis of policy actions and lessons learned. Others suggested that the structure follow the standardized format of reporting and address actions taken, successes in achieving implementation, obstacles and challenges, and how they can be overcome.

INFORMAL PANEL ON STREAMLINING FOREST-RELATED REPORTING

On Tuesday, 18 March, participants attended an evening informal panel discussion on streamlining forest-related reporting. Tiina Vahanen, FAO, presented an overview on the CPF Taskforce. She emphasized the partnership's objective to reduce the reporting burden and to help countries make the best use of existing information. She also highlighted the need for different organizations to work together to streamline information gathering, particularly in the areas of carbon stocks, C&I, baseline data on forest biodiversity, and capacity building for information collection, analysis and dissemination.

Michael Martin, FAO, cited a joint International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), EUROSTAT (Statistical office of the European Community) and FAO questionnaire on forest products and trade that successfully reduced the reporting burden. Although the information collection was shared among the organizations, he noted that each reported separately back to their respective governing body.

Eva Müeller, ITTO, stressed the importance of capacity building and the need to monitor and assess ITTO's C&I. She also said that the CPF taskforce provided a good opportunity for streamlining data collection and reporting formats. Susan Braatz, UNFF Secretariat, noted a significant reporting overlap between the UNFF, CBD, ITTO and CSD, and said the CPF will work on identifying other overlaps and find ways to avoid them in the future.

Stefan Hain, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), underlined his organization's commitment to developing synergy, harmonization and streamlining implementation of environmental conventions. Peter Holmgren, FAO, spoke on information management in reporting trends and actions, and the accessibility of the CPF's Internet portal.

REVIEW OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On Wednesday, 19 March, delegates met in a Plenary session to review working group conclusions and recommendations.

Working Group I: Chair Csoka presented his group's recommendations, noting the importance of facilitating the integration of PFAs into NFPs, national biodiversity strategies and other forest-related plans and programmes. He stressed that countries should make available the PFAs in a form that can be understood by actors at national and sub-national levels, and that countries should develop innovative and cost-effective ways to engage major groups in collaborative and cross-sectoral partnerships to increase capability and capacity to monitor, assess and report on PFA implementation. Other conclusions included: the need for CPF members, other international organizations, and regional institutions and processes to support efforts to strengthen national MAR capacity and capability; the work on MAR has to continue throughout the UNFF process and must be given high priority; the UNFF Secretariat should use reports and information received and disseminate information on MAR methods; the information provided in reports should be used by the UNFF to identify actions to support countries in their efforts to implement PFAs; and the multi-stakeholder dialogues have to be improved.

Working Group II: Chair Mossop presented her group's discussions, recommending that countries consider, *inter alia*: assessing which PFAs are the most relevant to the country; designing the implementation plan for the PFAs through an inclusive process involving as many relevant stakeholders as possible; monitoring the implementation of the PFAs through the assistance of NGOs, special interest groups, certification bodies, communities and independent third parties; developing, improving and using internal systems within their national forest programs, or similar processes, including reporting requirements for forest-related MEAs, for effective information collection, monitoring and assessment, to be used in the formulation of their reports to the UNFF; building further linkages between the MAR on implementation of PFAs and on C&I for SFM.

The group recommended, *inter alia*, that: existing regional structures incorporate agenda items or convene workshops to share expertise regarding the MAR process; reports to the UNFF be submitted according to a timetable drawn up by the UNFF Secretariat; the UNFF

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facilitate the provision of technical assistance for implementing a national reporting process; and UNFF “side events” be used to exchange information and be seen as an integral part of UNFF sessions.

The group also recommended, *inter alia*, that the UNFF Secretariat: provide member countries with a flexible format for reporting; analyze reports received prior to UNFF sessions; analyze achievements and progress made in implementation of the PFAs and use this analysis as a basis for discussion at UNFF sessions; and draw up a document explaining the purpose and format of reporting to encourage stakeholder participation in the MAR process, especially at the local or community level.

Working Group III: Delegates agreed, *inter alia*, on the following conclusions: the structure of UNFF sessions and the format of reports should parallel each other; the UNFF should seek to broaden awareness of the benefits of MAR; and reports should focus on implementation and list actions, successes, priorities and obstacles. The group also concluded that reporting to the UNFF should be integrated to take account of regional and international forest-related processes, and that CPF members should take steps to harmonize and streamline reporting requirements.

To facilitate streamlining of reporting, delegates recommended that: the UNFF and the CPF establish a clearinghouse mechanism on reporting; the UNFF foster an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to national and international MAR and implementation; and the UNFF request the CPF to increase its work in streamlining forest reporting and C&I processes. Regarding focusing MAR on implementation, they recommended that the UNFF expert group on MAR collect information on existing country and organization experiences and recommend guidelines to facilitate implementation. To facilitate participatory approaches to MAR, participants recommended coordination at the national level among focal points for all forest related processes; cataloging actions taken by countries, including their successes and challenges; and UNFF/CPF facilitating the allocation of adequate resources to cover the transaction costs of multistakeholder participation in MAR.

On information and capacity building, the group’s recommendations included: expanding awareness of the benefits of reporting and the meaning of PFAs; coordinating and facilitating access to technical and financial resources; and translating PFAs into national languages. Finally, participants agreed to recommend that UNFF sessions have segments for discussing lessons learned and analysis of policy examples, and encourage the use of regional and subregional processes, including regional commissions, to further MAR.

CLOSING PLENARY

Following a morning field trip to a local forest, participants met on Thursday, 20 March, in a closing Plenary to consider a draft report of the meeting prepared by a committee consisting of the working group chairs and rapporteurs, an additional representative from each group, and representatives from the meeting’s sponsoring countries. Co-Chair Stephanie Caswell introduced the report, noting that the report’s 21 conclusions and 21 recommendations represent a balanced synthesis of the outcomes of the three working groups. She added that the report will be considered an official UNFF document and translated into the official UN languages.

Before adopting the report, delegates made several interventions and comments. With respect to a conclusion regarding the usefulness of international cooperation, one delegate stressed that no African country has ever received international help in MAR or PFA implementation. The Plenary agreed to add a phrase on the need for cooperation. On a conclusion regarding the potential of information exchange to facilitate cooperation, some delegates proposed adding multilateral in addition to regional and bilateral levels. The meeting also accepted a proposal to add a conclusion on the need for additional travel support to enable developing country representation at UNFF sessions. A representative of the UNFF Secretariat noted that all CSD members are eligible for travel support to attend UNFF meetings.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following these amendments, delegates concluded, *inter alia*, that:

- the IPF-IFF Proposals for Action (PFAs) are a good reference point for national action but need to be applied to individual country conditions;
- a useful first step by countries toward implementation is to analyze which proposals are relevant, which need further work and which are priorities in both the short and long term, and to identify needs;
- translating the PFAs into national languages, clarifying the meaning of PFAs and clustering like proposals can promote a better understanding of and familiarity with the PFAs;
- communication and consultation among government and non-government stakeholders, including processes for public participation, can promote transparency, build confidence and demonstrate the value of implementing PFAs;
- countries are taking a range of actions to improve the sustainable management of their forests and to monitor the effectiveness of those actions, but not all countries have linked their ongoing and new activities to PFAs;
- countries are using a wide range of approaches for monitoring, assessing and reporting on implementation of PFAs. These include national forest programs and similar policy frameworks, existing systems for monitoring and assessing forest conditions and management, such as criteria and indicators, and new and innovative methods of collecting and sharing information;
- national forest inventories and criteria and indicators are useful tools for collecting and disseminating information to stakeholders relevant to a number of PFAs;
- MAR on PFA implementation through a transparent and participatory process involving all major groups is needed;
- countries need strengthened capacity to implement, monitor and assess PFAs, including financial and technical assistance and knowledge transfer;
- incorporating PFAs into existing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating programme and policy implementation can be useful and cost-effective, and public-private partnerships can also provide a cost-effective means of monitoring and assessing PFA implementation;
- collaboration and partnerships among government and non-government stakeholders can be important vehicles for MAR and PFA implementation, providing feedback to governments and promoting political support for action;

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- competing interests for land use and pressure from other sectors can impact implementation of PFAs and related MAR, and cross-sectoral policy approaches can address such issues and highlight forests on national and international policy agendas for sustainable development;
- further streamlining and harmonization of forest-related reporting is needed by international conventions and organizations to reduce burdens, improve efficiency, reduce costs and provide more useful information;
- a format for reports that is simple, easily understood and conducive to information exchange is needed;
- greater awareness of the potential benefits to countries of reporting to the UNFF and other forest related international fora is needed;
- reporting to the UNFF needs to be organized with a view to exchanging information on what countries are doing, including progress made, lessons learned and difficulties encountered. This can facilitate international consultation, co-operation and partnerships with CPF members, as well as among regional, subregional, bilateral and other multilateral partners;
- a flexible approach to reporting to UNFF on progress in implementing PFAs is needed to accommodate the needs, interests and perspectives of different countries and their approaches to MAR;
- the program of UNFF meetings needs to promote meaningful communication among countries and other stakeholders, for example through panels and side events on specific themes and other mechanisms that encourage the sharing of information; and
- the provision of additional support to enable representation by developing countries at UNFF meetings is needed.

In order to facilitate progress on monitoring, assessment and reporting on implementation of the PFAs, the final report recommends, *inter alia*, that:

- countries, as needed, translate PFAs into national languages, clarify their meaning, reduce their complexity, and cluster like proposals into a form that can be understood by government and non-government stakeholders at national and sub-national levels;
- countries undertake an initial PFA assessment process to determine which proposals are relevant to a country and which of these should be addressed as priorities through national forest programmes or similar country policy approaches;
- countries build further linkages between their efforts to monitor, assess and report on implementation of the PFAs and their work on criteria and indicators or similar approaches to assess trends in forest conditions and management;
- countries develop and strengthen innovative and cost effective ways to engage government and non-government stakeholders in collaborative efforts and partnerships to help MAR on implementation of PFAs, provide feed back on actions taken and promote political support for actions;
- CPF members, other international organizations, regional institutions and processes, and bilateral partners support through the provision of financial resources, technical assistance and transfer of appropriate technology and know how actions to strengthen national capacity and capability for MAR on the implementation of PFAs;

- countries seek domestic and external resources, including through new and additional resources and the reallocation of existing resources, to strengthen capacity to monitor, assess and report on the implementation of PFAs;
- the UNFF facilitate communication and collaboration between countries and CPF members, regional and subregional organizations, other multilateral partners and bilateral partners, with a view to supporting capacity building to monitor, assess and report on the implementation of PFAs;
- CPF continue its work on streamlining and harmonizing forest related reporting to international fora to reduce burdens on countries, improve efficiency, reduce costs and provide more useful information;
- the UNFF give a high priority to its work on MAR, which has an important role to play in demonstrating progress by countries and identifying challenges and needs;
- the UNFF adopt a practical approach to reporting, including a format for written reports that is oriented towards highlighting country approaches and processes, achievements, difficulties overcome, priorities, needs and challenges with respect to implementation of PFAs;
- the UNFF improve the multi-stakeholder dialogue as an integrated element of its sessions to provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of views and information;
- the UNFF facilitate meaningful communication amongst participants through integrating into the main sessions panels and “side events” on specific themes and other mechanisms that encourage the sharing of information, and countries be encouraged to submit reports in a timely manner consistent with a timetable to be drawn up by the UNFF;
- the UNFF at its third session identify the benefits and value to countries of reporting on their efforts to implement the PFAs;
- the UNFF/CPF establish an Internet-based clearinghouse mechanism to facilitate access by countries to information and approaches related to monitoring, assessment and reporting on implementation of PFAs;
- the UNFF establish at its third session the *ad hoc* Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting and include in its mandate the collection of existing country experiences on MAR on PFA implementation and formulation of recommendations on reporting guidelines for use by countries; and
- the UNFF also establish at its third session the *ad hoc* Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and include in its mandate the identification of needs for and sources of financial and technical support for MAR on implementation of the PFAs.

After reviewing each conclusion and recommendation, delegates adopted the final report.

CLOSING REMARKS: Stefano Grego, on behalf of Tuscia University, congratulated delegates on their hard work throughout the four-day meeting and for producing the Viterbo Report. Co-Chair Paolo Vicentini then thanked the co-sponsors, as well as the US Embassy in Rome, for their support in making the meeting a success. Bidding everyone *arrivederci*, he closed the meeting at 6:15pm.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTS

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

ECPF-2: The Second International Expert Consultation on the Role of Planted Forests (ECPF-2) will be held from 24-30 March 2003 in Wellington, New Zealand. For more information contact: Moira Jones, ECPF Secretariat; tel: +64-4-470-2734; fax: +64-4-473-0118; e-mail: plantedforestrymeeting@maf.govt.nz; Internet: <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/unff-planted-forestry-meeting>

AFLEG: The Africa Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (AFLEG) ministerial conference will take place on a date to be determined. As part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the AFLEG process aims to galvanize international and multi-stakeholder commitment at high political levels to strengthen capacity for forest law enforcement in Africa, in particular with regard to illegal exploitation of forest products and their associated trade. For more information contact: Kerstin Canby, World Bank; fax: +1-202-614-0475; e-mail: kcanby@worldbank.org; Internet: [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/essdext.nsf/14DocByUnid/EBD6B6ABCBB1935B85256CBD0060C3E1/\\$FILE/AFLEGConference.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/essdext.nsf/14DocByUnid/EBD6B6ABCBB1935B85256CBD0060C3E1/$FILE/AFLEGConference.pdf)

MCPFE-4: The Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) will take place from 28-30 April 2003 in Vienna, Austria. European ministers responsible for forests will take further decisions to promote progress towards the protection and sustainable management of forests in Europe. The Conference will be held under the joint chairmanship of Austria and Poland and is open to participants and observers of the MCPFE. For more information contact: Peter Mayer, Liaison Unit Vienna; tel: +43-1-710-7702; fax: +43-1-710-7702-13; e-mail: liaison.unit@lu-vienna.at; Internet: <http://www.mcpfe.org>

ITTC-34: The thirty-fourth session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC-34) will be held from 12-17 May 2003 in Panama City, Panama. The First Preparatory Committee for the negotiations of the Successor Agreement to ITTA, 1994 will be held immediately following the session. For more information contact: Alastair Sarre, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: editor@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL LIVELIHOODS, FORESTS AND BIODIVERSITY: This conference will convene from 19-23 May 2003, in Bonn, Germany. It will consider the role of forests in supporting rural livelihoods in developing countries and in maintaining biodiversity. Organizers include the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), in collaboration with Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). For more information contact: William Sunderlin, CIFOR; tel: +251-622-622; fax: +251-622-100; e-mail: w.sunderlin@cgiar.org; Internet: <http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/shared/template/livelihoodconference.asp>

UNFF-3: The third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-3) will be held from 26 May-6 June 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates will discuss, *inter alia*, means of, and progress in,

implementation, specifically related to economic aspects of forests, forest health and productivity, and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs. For more information contact: Mia Soderlund, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: unff@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOREST AND NATURAL RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT: This seminar will convene from 24 August-11 September 2003 in Denver, Colorado, USA. This seminar's themes are global perspective, policy, programmes and administration, sustainable management, and research and technology transfer. For more information contact: Ann Keith, Seminar Coordinator; tel: +1-970-482-8098; fax: +1-970-490-2449; e-mail: IFS@cnr.colostate.edu; Internet: <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/ispam/welcome.htm>

SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR ON FOREST RESEARCH CROSSING BORDERS: This seminar will convene from 28-29 August 2003 in Joensuu, Finland. Topics include the role of forests in creating welfare, effect of global change on sustainable forest management, forests in the pressure global policy-making and better information for good governance of forests. For more information contact: Anu Ruusila, European Forest Institute; tel: +358-13-252-0215; fax: +358-13-124-393; e-mail: anu.ruusila@efi.fi; Internet: <http://www.efi.fi/events/2003/10AC/seminar.html>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TROPICAL SAVANNAS AND SEASONALLY DRY FORESTS – ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: This conference will be held from 14-20 September 2003 in Edinburgh, United Kingdom. The meeting will bring together leading researchers in savanna and dry forest formations throughout the tropics and will focus on five principal themes: plant biodiversity; animal biodiversity; palaeo-ecology and environmental change; environment and environmental processes; and human ecology and development. For more information contact: Edinburgh Centre for Tropical Forests; tel: +44-131-440-0400; fax: +44-131-440-4141; e-mail: savanna-conference@ectf-ed.org.uk; Internet: <http://www.nmw.ac.uk/ectf/events.htm#International>

12TH WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS: The Congress will be held from 21-28 September 2003 in Québec City, Canada. Organized under the auspices of the FAO, the Congress is held every six years. For more information contact: World Forestry Congress 2003 Secretariat; tel: +1-418-694-2424; fax: +1-418-694-9922; e-mail: sec-gen@wfc2003.org; Internet: <http://www.wfc2003.org>

ITTC-35: ITTC-35 will convene from 3-8 November 2003 in Yokohama, Japan. For more information contact: Alastair Sarre, ITTO Secretariat; tel: +81-45-223-1110; fax: +81-45-223-1111; e-mail: editor@itto.or.jp; Internet: <http://www.itto.or.jp>

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON FOREST PROTECTED AREAS: This workshop will convene from 6-8 November 2003 in Montreal, Canada. It is sponsored by the Convention on Biological Diversity. For more information contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>