

Aide Mémoire of the UNFF1 Bureau meeting

UNFF Secretariat, DC-2 Building, New York

7 June 2001

11:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Attendees:

UNFF Bureau: Ambassador Mubarak Rahmtalla (Sudan), Chairman of the UNFF Bureau. Other attendees were Ambassador M. Slamet Hidayat (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, as well as Geir Tonnessen (Norway) and Ruben Espinoza (Peru).

UNFF Secretariat: Jag Maini, Jaime Hurtubia and Mahendra Joshi

ECOSOC Secretariat: Ms. June Chesney

1. Briefing by the Chairman on the preparation for the UNFF I
2. Organization of work
3. Other issues
4. Postponement of the UNFF Bureau meeting

The following were the main points of the meeting:

1. Briefing by the Chairman on the preparation for the UNFF I

Ambassador Rahmtalla opened the meeting with two positive notes: (1) the intergovernmental process on forest sector in the past decade has been heralded as a success story on sustainable development and (2) the governments had appreciated the excellent work done by the UNFF Secretariat.

Chairman informed the meeting about: (i) the three briefings to the regional groups on UNFF I in May, (ii) his participation to the Pan European Forest Process in Brussels, (iii) the meeting between himself and Dr. Emil Salim, Chairman of CSD 10, and (iv) the meeting between himself and the Swedish Ambassador Mr. Norman who will be heading the EU delegation at the UNFF I. He also informed that he had written to the chairmen of the regional groups requesting them to consider election of the Bureau for UNFF II.

The meeting recognized that UNFF I should focus on reaching decision on its multi-year programme of work and formulating a framework for the development of the UNFF Plan of Action (POA). The main thrust of the session should be on making the UNFF action-oriented and forward looking, while remaining pragmatic.

Issues of scheduling of the ministerial segment and timing of the second session were also noted. The modality of inputs from UNFF to WSSD was also considered in this context.

2. Organization of Work

The functioning of UNFF I in the coming two weeks would be based on the provisional agenda as per the ECOSOC resolution. The daily meetings would be either in Plenary or in two working sessions. It was considered that the Chairman would chair the plenary sessions while working groups would be chaired by two Vice-Chairmen. Ambassador Hidayat would chair the working group on POA and CPF while Mr. Knut Øistad (Norway) was invited to chair the working group on MYPOW. Mr. Tonnessen would inform the Chairman on this after consulting with Mr. Øistad.

Taking into consideration the conflict of timing on Monday, 11 June between the UNFF and the special session of the General Assembly on Children (at 10 am), it was decided that the UNFF would open its session at 11 AM on that day. This would be announced in the UN Journal.

It was considered desirable to convene daily brief Bureau meetings to review the progress in deliberations and/or plan for the coming days.

The proposed organization of work, that planned to begin negotiations the soonest, i.e., from Wednesday, 13 June 2001, was found acceptable.

The meeting took note of the need to accredit the IGOs, including CIFOR and ITTO by the Forum. The Note from the Secretariat had been prepared for this purpose. No difficulty in receiving the accreditation from the Forum was anticipated. Different options were also considered in providing access to NGOs that have not yet received accreditation with ECOSOC.

It was noted that Chairman and the Bureau members would convene an informal meeting by with NGOs and other stakeholders on Thursday, June 14 at 6:15 PM to exchange views regarding how to organize multi-stakeholder dialogues in the future UNFF sessions.

3. Other Issues

Chairman also brought to the attention of the participants of the meeting the following issues raised by the governments during the regional briefings as well as his personal consultations with delegates:

Drafting of decisions for UNFF. Group of 77 and China requested him to consider the system followed by the Second Committee as one option. This option allows the Group of 77 and China to present a draft decision as the first text for negotiations. This system, however, does not prevent any other regional group or individual state member from presenting their own drafts for further consideration and negotiations.

Financial stability of the UNFF Secretariat. Governments were concerned that the Proposed Programme Budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/56/6 (sect. 9) did not include the budget for the UNFF Secretariat. Chairman would contact personnel in the Programme Planning and Budget Division and inform them of the interest of the UNFF to hear their explanation to the Forum on the issue.

Establishment of expert groups. The governments expressed their interest to know when and how many expert groups, on different issues under consideration by the UNFF, would be established by the UNFF.

4. Postponement of the UNFF Bureau meeting

The meeting considered that since it was able to cover all items on the agenda of the Bureau meeting scheduled for Sunday, 10 June 2001, there was no need for the Bureau to meet on Sunday. This would be so communicated to the Vice-Chairmen from Norway and Peru by their respective contact persons present in the meeting, and to Russian Federation (through Mr. Dmitry Maksimychev) by the UNFF Secretariat.

It was decided that the Bureau would meet on Monday, 11 June 2001 at 10:30 AM at the UN Secretariat in Room 1.