

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the First post UNFF11 Meeting of the Bureau of the Eleventh Session
13 November 2015 (10:00 am-1:00 pm, 2:30-7:30 pm)- New York

Participation

Bureau Members: Mr. Wu Zhimin (China), Mr. Srecko Juricic (Croatia), Mr. Heikki Granholm (Finland), Mr. Vicente Bezerra (Brazil)

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Ms. Afsa Kemitale-Rothschild, Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Mr. Ryo Nakamura, Mr. Tomasz Juszczak

Secretary of the Forum: Mr. Moncef Khane and his Deputy, Ms. Sangeeta Sharma

Others: H.E. Mr. Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Permanent Representative of Gabon), Mr. Jean-Pierre-Hemery Doumbeneny Ndzigna (Mission of Gabon), Ms. Emilia Van Veen (Mission of Finland)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

- 1. Subject to the decision of the Chair of UNFF, a letter will be addressed to the President of ECOSOC to seek the assistance of the Council to authorize the convening of a half-day organizational session of the Forum to:**
 - (a) Elect members of the UNFF12 Bureau**
 - (b) Recommend the date and venue of UNFF12**
 - (c) Adopt the provisional agenda for UNFF12**
- 2. The first meeting of AHEG which was originally scheduled to be held from 20 to 22 January 2016, is now postponed and will be held from 25 to 27 April 2016 in New York.**
- 3. The deadline for submission of views and proposals by Member States and stakeholders on the IAF strategic plan and the first quadrennial programme of work of the Forum (2017-2020) is now extended to 15 January 2016.**
- 4. The next meetings of the Bureau will be held in March 2016 in Japan and, in conjunction with AHEG1 in April 2016 in New York.**

Provisional Agenda

First post UNFF11 Meeting of the Bureau of the Eleventh Session

13 November 2015 (10:00 am-1:00 pm, 2:30-7:30 pm) - New York

- 1- Opening
- 2- Review of post-UNFF11 and/or UNFF12 Bureau situation
- 3- Review of implementation of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, including key intersessional activities:
 - a. Update on implementation of the provisions of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015, *inter alia*:
 - i. Status of the adoption of modifications to the UN Forest Instrument by the General Assembly;
 - ii. Paragraph 16c on MAR
 - iii. Paragraph 17b(iv) and 36 on the coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contribution to the HLPF;
 - iv. Paragraph 22 on the CPF
 - v. Paragraph 26 on regional and sub-regional involvement; and
 - vi. Paragraph 33 on the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders
 - b. Preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1)
 - i. Preparatory work, including preparation of a paper with elements for a strategic plan;
 - ii. Views by Member States and other stakeholders on matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33;
 - iii. Nomination of AHEG Co-Chairs;
 - iv. Date, venue and documentation;
 - v. Nomination of experts and level of available XB funding for travel support.
 - c. PBIs of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33
- 4- Progress report on the operationalization of the GFFFN and its activities since UNFF11
- 5- Update on the recent and upcoming events
- 6- Future meeting(s) of the Bureau
- 7- Other matters
 - i. The status of the UNFF Trust Fund and the estimated required resources to fund intersessional activities.
- 8- Closing

1. Opening

At the request of the Chair of UNFF11, H.E. Mr. Noel Messone (Gabon), Mr. Vicente Bezerra chaired the meeting as Acting Chair and welcomed Bureau Members and participants to the meeting. He informed that Mr. Messone was not able to attend the meeting and had asked him to preside over the Bureau meeting. The provisional agenda of the first meeting was adopted. The Bureau welcomed the participation Mr. H.E. Mr. Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Permanent Representative of Gabon).

2. Review of post-UNFF11 and/or UNFF12 Bureau situation

The Bureau invited the Secretary of the Forum to provide information about the respective rules of procedure on the status of the UNFF11 Bureau.

The Secretary of the Forum reiterated the clarifications he had provided in his communications to the Bureau on the status of the UNFF11 Bureau. He referred to his letter dated 31 July 2015 in which he confirmed that that Officers of the Forum were expected to hold office until their successors are elected in accordance with Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). He also informed that the status of the Chair would remain unchanged unless the Chair were to resign his position prior to the election of his successor. He clarified that while one of the Vice-Chairs may be designated to act as the Chair, should the Chair be temporarily absent. The Chairperson of the UNFF12 Bureau shall be decided on the basis of equitable geographical rotation. He reiterated that should all Bureau Members resign their position, regional groups would be invited to nominate candidates for election as officers of UNFF12 who, as per past practice, will act as the *de facto* Bureau until their election at the first meeting of UNFF12 in accordance with Rule 15 of the Rule of Procedures. Thus, a resignation of all members would have the same practical effect as an election. He also confirmed that should any Member of the Bureau resign their position, he would upon receipt of a formal communication to that effect send letters to the chair of the regional groups to invite them to nominate endorsed candidates for election as Officers of UNFF12. The Secretary of the Forum, however, informed that he has not received any letter of resignation from any member of the UNFF11 Bureau.

The Bureau thanked the Secretary of the Forum for his explanation. The Bureau Members also noted that “election of UNFF12 Bureau members” was not the only organizational matter that was not addressed at the end of UNFF11. The Bureau noted other organizational matters regarding UNFF12, namely decision on the date, venue, and provisional agenda for UNFF12 could not be addressed immediately after UNFF11. Such actions were neither taken at the time of the adoption of the UNFF11 outcome by the ECOSOC in July 2015. The Bureau members expressed concerns that the lack of decision on the organizational matters related to UNFF12, namely the date, venue, provisional agenda of UNFF12, and the election of UNFF12 Bureau, pose a significant risk to delay implementation of the provisions of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, and, in particular, the intersessional activities. The Bureau requested the UNFF Secretariat to inform about similar experiences in the past and the actions the Forum/Bureau took to address the problems. The Secretary of the Forum clarified that the first meeting of UNFF12 could not be convened upon the conclusion of UNFF11 as a decision of ECOSOC to extend the Forum’s mandate was a prerequisite to convening the first meeting of UNFF12; regarding the date and venue of UNFF12, he advised that such a decision would be taken by the Council in due course

and did not require a recommendation by the Forum; in respect to the provisional agenda, he stressed that provisional agendas were, as a matter of course, prepared by the Secretariat and formally adopted at the outset of a session; in view of the fact that the outcome of the Working Group established in accordance with paragraphs 46-47 of Council resolution 2015/33, a provisional agenda should hence not be adopted prior to the conclusion of the proceedings of the Working Group.

The UNFF Secretariat draw the attention of the Bureau to the well-established practice by the Forum in dealing with the adoption of the provisional agenda of its upcoming session. Accordingly, all provisional agendas of the previous sessions of the Forum have always been adopted by the Forum itself and well in advance of the upcoming session of the Forum, in order to allow substantive preparations by Member States and the UNFF Secretariat. The UNFF Secretariat informed that the Forum has a precedence of convening an organizational session in February 2001, prior to the convening of the UNFF1, through which the Forum addressed a number of organizational matters. The UNFF Secretariat also informed the Bureau that after UNFF8, the Bureau brought an important matter to the attention of the ECOSOC. Pursuant to the action by the Bureau, the Council authorized the Forum to hold a one day special session of UNFF9 to conclude the negotiations and to adopt the draft resolution on means of implementation for sustainable forest management. The Secretariat expressed views that such precedence could be used to solve the UNFF12 organizational matters.

Subsequently, the Bureau held a thorough discussion on several options to address pending organizational matters related to UNFF12, respecting the rules of procedure and taking into account the past practice of the Forum. The Bureau agreed, subject to the Chair's approval, to send a formal letter to the President of the ECOSOC so as to seek the assistance of the ECOSOC to authorize the convening of a half-day organizational session of the Forum at its earliest convenience to: elect members of the UNFF12 Bureau; recommend the date and venue of UNFF12 to the ECOSOC; and adopt the provisional agenda for UNFF12. The Bureau has the understanding that the UNFF11 bureau will continue to function until the election of the UNFF12 Bureau in accordance with the rules of procedure.

3. Review of implementation of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, including key intersessional activities:

a. Update on implementation of the provisions of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33

The UNFF Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the various measures that it has taken to implement the provisions of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33:

- The first informal consultation on the draft General Assembly resolution to modify the UN Forest Instrument took place on 9 November 2015. While there exists a wide support to the modifications, some countries expressed reservations to proceed further until the Bureau clarifies the way forward on the UNFF12 Bureau situation.
- Regarding paragraph 16c on monitoring, assessment and reporting, The Secretariat is planning a consultative process, including the organization of informal consultation on the margins of AHEG1 to discuss the initial ideas for the reporting format.
- Regarding paragraph 17b (iv) and 36 on the coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contribution to the HLPF, the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda is scheduled to be finalized and released by December 2015 and the Secretariat has been active in the inter-divisional consultation and

submitting its input particularly on the role of functional commissions in the thematic review at the HLPF.

- Regarding paragraph 22 on the CPF, CPF members will discuss key issues and options for the implementation of the resolution related to the Partnership based on written inputs in the upcoming working meeting scheduled to take place on 3 December 2015, on the margins of the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris.
- Regarding paragraph 26 on regional and sub-regional involvement, relevant regional and sub-regional organizations have been invited to provide inputs on the IAF strategic plan.
- Regarding paragraph 33 on the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development has nominated a focal point and an alternate focal point for the business and industries major groups.

b. Preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1)

The UNFF Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1) scheduled to be convened from 20-22 January 2016 at UNHQ in New York. There have been nomination of experts from 30 developing countries and 4 developed countries to date. The Bureau was reminded that the resolution specifies that the AHEG is to conduct its meetings subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. The Bureau was also informed that there has been no extrabudgetary funding so far to support the travel of eligible experts for participation in AHEG1. Lack of availability of funding would impact negatively a balanced representation of countries at AHEG1. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that the nomination of the candidate for a Co-Chair from the South has been received whereas the North is yet to nominate its candidate. 14 Member States, and two regional organizations submitted their views on matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the resolution. These views will be compiled and submitted electronically to AHEG1. The Secretariat also informed that it has prepared a Note for AHEG1. This Note contains background information on the mandate of the AHEG, as well as the outcomes of recent major conferences and their interlinkages with the work of the AHEG.

The Secretariat further briefed on its activities, noting that it commissioned a study on possible elements for the strategic plan to senior consultants and the study will be ready in December 2015. It was added that the Secretariat, in collaboration with Japan, was planning to hold a small expert panel meeting, to discuss this elements paper, in advance of AHEG1 in November 2015. However, this could not be materialized due to the logistical constraints resulting from the blackout period for the deployment of the new operations system across the UN Secretariat, which continue to affect the logistical preparations of the meetings, including AHEG1. The Secretariat further informed the Bureau that this expert panel meeting is now scheduled to be held in Japan, sometime in March 2016.

c. PBIs of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33

The UNFF Secretariat provided updates on the consideration of the programme budget implications (PBIs) of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 at the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. The ACABQ considered PBIs of the resolution, including four additional posts to deliver the new mandate, on 26 October and is in the process of submitting its report to the Fifth Committee for their consideration.

After listening to the explanations on the items 3a, 3b and 3c, the Bureau thanked the Secretariat for closely following up on the implementation of the resolution and its efforts in the preparation of key intersessional activities. The Bureau further discussed and considered the preparatory status of AHEG1, and decided to postpone AHEG1 from 20-22 January 2016 to 25-27 April 2016 to allow additional time for countries and stakeholders to submit their views, and to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to support travel of eligible representatives to AHEG1. The Bureau also invited the UNFF Secretariat to explore the possibility of holding AHEG2 by the end of September 2016.

The Bureau further agreed to extend the deadline for submission of views from Member States and stakeholders by 15 January 2016 to the Secretariat. The submitted views will be posted on the Forum's website and the study on elements for the IAF strategic plan would be shared with Member States by 15 February 2016. The Bureau welcomed the offer made by Japan to host and contribute to a meeting of the expert panel in March 2016. The Bureau noted that the outcomes of the study and the deliberation of the meeting of the expert panel on this study will inform and contribute to the discussion at AHEG1 in April 2016.

4. Progress report on the operationalization of the GFFFN and its activities since UNFF11

The UNFF Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the plans and actions taken to operationalize the GFFFN, outlining the activities related to the ongoing implementation of regional capacity-building workshops in the Pacific, Central Asia and Southern Africa and national project proposal development. The Secretariat is closely working with the Global Environment Facility to develop project proposals in Senegal and Cameroon as pilot countries to be supported by the GEF.

The Secretariat informed that while the GFFFN continues to rely on voluntary contributions, the Secretariat secured over USD400.000 from the UN Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation for partially funding the implementation of its activities. The Secretariat has also reached out to several potential donors for support and already received USD200.000 pledge from China. Ongoing consultations with China are also focusing on the possibility of longer-term, predictable and stable funding for the operation of the GFFFN.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the oral and written briefing, and its efforts in operationalizing the GFFFN, as well as welcomed contributions from donors, including the ongoing efforts by China to provide a long-term funding to support the GFFFN. In view of the wide interest expressed in its activities, it was agreed to further promote the work of the GFFFN, including through the organization of a side event on the GFFFN during AHEG1.

5. Update on the recent and upcoming events

The Secretariat briefed on the outcomes of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the UN Summit on the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the expected outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21/UNFCCC), noting the importance to analyze and digest these outcomes in order to identify the necessary actions and measures for inclusion in the strategic plan of the IAF while ensuring consistency and coherence with the 2030 Agenda and other major processes.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the briefing and agreed to consider ensuring its

representation at the upcoming events, including the forty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission scheduled to be convened in March 2016 and the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) scheduled to be convened in July 2016.

6. Future meeting(s) of the Bureau

The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on the margins of the meeting of the expert panel scheduled to be convened in March 2016 in Japan, to be followed by a meeting of the Bureau during AHEG1 in April 2016 at UNHQ in New York.

7. Other matters

The Secretariat provided the oral and written briefing on the available resources of the UNFF Trust Fund, the trend in contribution by donor countries, as well as detailed estimated required resources to fund intersessional activities, including the contributions and pledges to the UNFF Trust Fund 2014-2015, estimated requirements for 2016-2017, and estimated balance as of 31 December 2015.

8. Closing

The Vice-Chair thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.