

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Fifth Session (UNFF 5 Bureau)**

Minutes of the fourth meeting

Friday, 14 January 2005

10:00 – 1:00 PM New York Time (EST)

Participation

Bureau members: Mr. Manuel Rodríguez-Becerra (Chair), H.E. Mr. Rezlan Ishar Jenie, and H.E. Mr. Denys Gauer. H.E. Mr. Francis K. Butagira (from Uganda) and Mr. Adam Craciunescu (from Romania) participated in the meeting by telephone conference. Mr. Vasile Lupu, Advisor to Minister on forest issues, Romania, also joined by telephone conference from Romania.

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Ms. Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, Mr. Mahendra Joshi, Mr. Peter Csoka and Mr. Jorge Illueca.

UNFF Secretary: Mr. Moncef Khane

Other: Mr. Tri Tharyat, Indonesian Mission, and Ms. Gabriela Tanjala, Romanian Mission.

The second meeting of the Bureau considered the following agenda items:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Preparations for the fifth session of UNFF
3. Informal consultations with regional and/or negotiating groups on the preparations for UNFF5
4. Other business

Opening of the meeting

Mr. Manuel Rodríguez-Becerra chaired the meeting.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda circulated in advance.

2. Preparations for the fifth session of UNFF

The Bureau reviewed the preparations for UNFF and took a number of decisions:

Organization of work

The Chairman would chair plenary sessions and high-level segment as much as practical and Vice-Chairmen would chair the two Working Groups. The Bureau would

take decisions on the division of labour among the Bureau members (for working group chairmanships and rapporteur) at the meeting, to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico. It is decided that this meeting will take place on Wednesday, 26 January 2005 during the breakfast hours.

High-level ministerial segment (25 - 26 May 2004)

The Bureau discussed different approaches to make the high-level ministerial segment (HLS) more effective, interactive and linked to the crucial decision-making process. It is suggested that the HLS be made a real dialogue and that ministers be given opportunity to make their short interventions on the specific topics of the discussions and also to make brief (1 min.) responses to the comments from the floor. The Bureau underscored the importance of skilled moderators for making the HLS a success, and requested the Secretariat to identify and suggest possible moderators.

Documentation

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the progress in the preparations of the documentation for UNFF 5. Documents are expected to be ready on schedule.

3. Informal consultations with regional and/or negotiating groups on the preparations for UNFF5

As decided in the previous meetings, the Bureau invited the chairpersons of the regional groups for a briefing and exchange ideas on the preparation for the fifth session at the bureau meeting (**in the afternoon, from 3 to 5 PM**). The main purpose of such a briefing was to raise awareness about the fifth session and important issues on its agenda. The Bureau agreed to cover the following points at the briefing:

- Inform on the issues for UNFF5, which require advance planning and consultations (e.g., informal consultations dates, chairman's non-paper, etc.)
- Decisions to be taken at UNFF5
- National reports and responses to the questionnaire from member States
- High-level segment (modality, dates, expected outcomes, advance preparations, etc.)
- Other activities such as intersessional expert meetings

The Bureau considered the usefulness and implications of the planned Chairman's non-paper. It was considered a worthwhile endeavour to sensitize member States on the crucial issues of UNFF5 and facilitate the discussions. The non-paper would lay out diversity of views on politically sensitive issues without taking any positions. Earlier distribution of the non-paper was deemed preferable.

(Note: See the summary of the afternoon meeting with the regional groups at the end of the document)

4. Other business

Mexico-US initiative (25-28 January 2005 in Guadalajara, Mexico)

The Mexico-US initiative in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the future of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) is expected to have about 170 experts from 80 countries. All Bureau members with the exception of H.E. Mr. Butagira would participate in the meeting in Mexico. Mr. Butagira had a conflict of schedules.

Next bureau meeting

The date for the next meeting was fixed for Wednesday, 26 January 2005 during the breakfast hours, in Guadalajara, Mexico. The main agenda item would be the division of labour among the bureau members during the UNFF5 session.

Country- and Organization-led initiatives

The Bureau was briefed on the planned country- and organization-led initiatives in support of UNFF.

Letter from President of ECOSOC

Mr. Manuel Rodriguez, Chair, informed the Bureau about the letter from President of ECOSOC, informing of the important resolutions and decisions of ECOSOC 2004 and requesting UNFF Bureau to take on board those resolutions and decisions. The theme for 2005 ECOSOC High-Level Segment is "*Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing outcomes of the major UN conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities*". The Bureau agreed that the theme of UNFF5 for the first day high-level segment would perfectly complement and contribute to the ECOSOC theme.

Letter from Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development of Romania on change in Bureau membership

Mr. Patosaari informed the Bureau about a letter addressed from Mr. Gheorghe Flutter, Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development of Romania, dated 12 January 2005. In the letter the Minister informed the Secretariat that due to change in responsibility of Mr. Adam Craciunescu in the Government, he would not continue as the member of the UNFF5 Bureau. In his place, the Minister had proposed to engage Mr. Vasile Lupu, Advisor to Minister on forest issues. On this matter, the representative from the Permanent Mission of Romania, Ms. Gabriela Tanjala, informed the Bureau that the Mission had referred the matter to the Eastern European Group, requesting it for the nomination of Mr. Lupu to replace Mr. Craciunescu. She also informed the Bureau that Mr. Craciunescu would participate in the Guadalajara meeting. The Bureau noted that once the nomination of a new member by the Group was made, then it would be formalized only at the first meeting of the fifth session of UNFF.

Both Mr. Craciunescu and Mr. Lupu participated in the bureau meeting via tele-conference from their capital Bucharest (however, the telephone connection was not very clear at times).

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Manuel Rodríguez-Becerra expressed satisfaction with the discussion held at the meeting and thanked the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat, and adjourned the meeting until 3 pm when it met with the Chairpersons of the regional groups and other delegates.

Summary of the meeting with the chairpersons of regional groups of the United Nations in New York (03:00 – 05:00 PM, DC 2 - 23rd Floor)

The Bureau briefed the chairpersons or their representatives and other delegates on the preparations for the fifth session of the Forum. The topics included key decision issues such as the review of effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, future actions and consideration of parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests with view of recommending to ECOSOC and General Assembly, and dates for the high-level ministerial segment at UNFF5. The Bureau underscored the significance of the high-level ministerial segment and urged the delegates to encourage their ministers responsible for forests to participate in the high-level segment. The Bureau and Secretariat also urged the delegates to send national reports and completed questionnaires to facilitate the review process.

The Chairman also informed the delegates that the Bureau has planned to convene an informal consultations meeting tentatively on 28 February 2004 in New York. The Chair will consider distributing a non-paper to facilitate the preparations of member States for the effective dialogue and decision making at UNFF 5. The delegates appreciated the Bureau for convening the briefing meeting.