

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Seventh Session (UNFF7 Bureau)
Minutes of the second meeting**

UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, New York
24-25 August 2006

Participation

Bureau members: Mr. Hans Hoogeveen, H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali, Mr. Arvids Ozols and Mr. Andre-Jules Madingou. Mr. Andres Landerretche represented H.E. Mr. Cristian Maquieira.

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Mr. Mahendra Joshi, Mr. Jorge Illueca, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Afsa Kemitale and Ms. Catalina Santamaria.

Secretary of the Forum: Ms. Vivian Pliner.

Others: Ms. Mira Woldberg, Mission of the Netherlands; Mr. Razif Mubin, Mission of Malaysia; and Mr. Gregoire Lomba, Mission of Gabon.

The agenda of the second meeting of the Bureau were the following:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Adoption of the minutes of the first meeting, held on 21 June 2006
3. Preparations for the Seventh Session and intersessional work in the context of the outcome of ECOSOC
4. Follow-up to other decisions of the first meeting of the Bureau
5. Discussion of the preparations for the Seventh Session
6. Other matters

Opening of the meeting

Mr. Hoogeveen chaired the meeting of the Bureau and welcomed all members of the Bureau and the Secretariat. He informed the Bureau that H.E. Mr. Cristian Maquieira, Bureau member from Chile, had sent regrets for his inability to attend the meeting, and that Mr. Andres Landerretche from the Permanent Mission of Chile was participating on his behalf.

1. Adoption of agenda

The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda circulated in advance, without amendments.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the first meeting, held on 21 June 2006

The draft minutes of the first meeting circulated by the Secretariat were adopted by the Bureau.

3. Preparations for the Seventh Session and intersessional work in the context of the outcome of ECOSOC

3.1.1 Adoption of UNFF6 report by ECOSOC

Mr. Patosaari informed the Bureau of the amendments and the process leading to the adoption of the report of UNFF6 in the July 2006 substantive session of ECOSOC. He briefed the Bureau on discussions regarding programme budget implications (PBI) of the draft ECOSOC

resolution, negotiated at UNFF6, and subsequent adoption of the ECOSOC resolution and decision of UNFF 6, with the following two amendments:

- (i) The concept of convening an ad hoc working group (AHWG) on a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI) had been changed to an ad hoc **expert** group (AHEG) in the final resolution (see Paragraph 29 of the resolution). The resources for convening an AHEG would be met from the existing appropriation under section 9, Economic and Social Affairs, or the Trust Fund in Support of the United Nations Forum on Forests.
- (ii) The actual year for the Proclamation of an International Year of Forests had been changed to **2011** (instead of 2010, as contained in the draft resolution).

The Bureau expressed satisfaction with the adoption of the UNFF6 report including the ECOSOC resolution, which aimed to strengthen the international arrangement on forests and expanded the mandate of UNFF.

3.1.2 Arrangements for the ad hoc expert group meeting (AHEG)

The Bureau expressed the wish that the AHEG will be equally effective in meeting the expectations of the member States of the Forum. It reviewed the arrangements for the upcoming meeting of AHEG.

Ms. Pliner, Secretary of the Forum, confirmed the dates and venue for the AHEG as 11-15 December 2006, New York. Ms. Pliner also informed the Bureau that, normally, an AHEG meeting would be provided with only one conference room and sound system without interpretation. However, considering the significance of this open-ended AHEG, the Secretary was able to secure two conference rooms. In regard to interpretation, the provision could not be guaranteed and would be on an "as available" basis only. She anticipated that one set of interpreters might be made available to the meeting. In addition, she confirmed that the official AHEG documents would be translated into all official UN languages.

The Bureau took note and agreed to make every effort to secure the necessary arrangements to service a successful meeting. The Bureau expressed the necessity for having two big conference rooms and two teams of interpreters. These conditions are crucial for a successful outcome. The Bureau will come back to this issue during its next bureau meeting in October.

Furthermore, the Bureau considered and reacted to the terms of reference of the AHEG. The idea of the Bureau is to stay as close as possible to the concept of a working group, in order to have a first round of negotiations on a NLBI. In this respect countries will be asked to designate delegates to the expert group.

The Bureau also underscored the need to hold a meeting with the focal points of major groups to exchange views and receive stakeholder input on the NLBI. They stressed the need to encourage regional groups to meet prior to the 11th of December to avoid time delay during the actual AHEG meeting. In this regard, the Chair mentioned that DSA would be available for those country experts who qualify, to ensure their arrival for coordination within their groups before the AHEG meeting.

The Bureau suggested the need for convening an informal briefing to the delegations in

New York, and, in this context, reviewed the draft roadmap prepared by the Secretariat indicating the forthcoming events and bureau calendar at this time.

Decisions Taken

- The dates and venues of AHEG meeting were confirmed as 11-15 December 2006 in New York.
- The terms of reference for the ad hoc expert group was agreed; the Bureau would chair the AHEG meeting.
- A meeting with focal points of major groups would be held in the afternoon of 7 December 2006 in the UNFF Conference Room. The Bureau would briefly meet in the morning on 7 December.
- The next Bureau Meeting would be held on the 12 of October 2006.
- An informal briefing would be held about one month before the AHEG (early November) in New York to brief the delegates on the arrangements and substantive issues for the AHEG on the NLBI.
- Bureau members, to the extent possible, would attend regional meetings, as suggested in the road map. In this regard, the Secretariat would facilitate the participation of H.E Mr. Maquieira at the OAS meeting in October 2006 in Bolivia.
- Members would provide information to the Secretariat concerning relevant meetings scheduled in regions in order to continuously update the roadmap. The roadmap would be reviewed at every Bureau meeting.

3.1.3 Note analyzing the proposals on elements of a non-legally binding instrument (NLBI)

The Secretariat introduced a discussion Note analyzing the proposals on elements of a non-legally binding instrument (NLBI) submitted by the member States, regional groups and major groups. This Note was prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Bureau during its first meeting, highlighting commonalities, differences and possible additional desirable elements for a NLBI for the Bureau's consideration.

The Bureau appreciated the Note and focused its discussion on substantive and procedural aspects of a new NLBI. Some of the issues discussed included: better clarification on the purpose; relationship with UNFF and its multi-year programme of work (MYPOW); relationship with other forest-related instruments; incorporation of the four global objectives on forests; definitions; implementation and reporting, including the use of seven thematic elements; the use of agreed text from the past UNFF resolutions; means of implementation; and implications of proposals of subscription, adoption, peer reviews/compliance, among other points.

The Bureau advised the Secretariat to further develop the Note based on the discussion of the meeting and also taking into account the comments from member States and other groups on the compilation, expected in the near future. It also considered a need to provide extra time for member States to provide their comments on the compilation of proposals.

Decisions Taken

- The Secretariat to present a revised Note on the NLBI at the next Bureau meeting, taking into account the discussion of the Bureau meeting and comments provided by

member States and other groups on the compilation. This Note should be prepared for the AHEG meeting.

- The Secretariat to further develop an outline of the instrument with integral text. This would entail a first draft of the instrument, including options based on differing proposals on specific issues provided by countries.
- The date for submitting comments by member States on the compilation of proposals extended to 15 September 2006.

3.2 Meeting of Chairpersons of the Functional Commissions and panel discussion

Mr. Hans Hoogeveen briefed the Bureau on his participation in the meeting with the ECOSOC Bureau and on the panel discussion of the Chairpersons of the functional commissions, held 7 July 2006 in Geneva during the ECOSOC substantive session. These meetings provided an opportunity to showcase UNFF and its contribution to ECOSOC's new mandate. It was recommended, that such meetings should take place earlier, during the substantive session, to make better use of time and to facilitate cooperation and collaboration among the functional commissions of ECOSOC.

4. Follow-up to other decisions of the first meeting of the Bureau

The Bureau exchanged information on the follow-up to the decisions taken at the first meeting, on: consultations with member States; approaching FAO and other CPF members for staff secondment and interagency cooperation, and fundraising for UNFF.

The Chair informed the Bureau that he had already sent a letter to the Director-General of FAO as per the decision of the first meeting. He also informed that letters to the Heads of governing bodies of CPF have already been sent inviting their support for enhanced interagency cooperation. He also announced that the Netherlands has committed funds to the UNFF Trust Fund, and encouraged Bureau members to encourage donors in their respective regions for contributions to said Trust Fund.

5. Discussion on the preparations for the Seventh Session

5.1 Substantive issues

The Bureau reviewed the substantive issues to be concluded and adopted at the seventh session, specifically: (i) the non-legally binding instrument, and (ii) the MYPOW. As requested by the Bureau at its first meeting, the Secretariat prepared Discussion Notes on the MYPOW, the Regional Dimension in UNFF and Interagency collaboration, including CPF. The Bureau reviewed the information presented in the notes.

On the *MYPOW*, the Secretariat highlighted the importance of developing a focused MYPOW, taking into consideration biennial sessions, global objectives, additional principal functions, the NLBI, grouping of issues for deliberations at each session, inputs from regions, and recurrent issues such as multi-stakeholder dialogue and high-level segment, among others. The Bureau noted the complexity in developing a MYPOW for adoption at UNFF7. They highlighted the need to clearly link the MYPOW and the NLBI.

On the Note on *Regional Dimensions*, the Bureau expressed the need for allowing regions to design their own formats, functions and meetings in light of their particular experiences and mechanisms. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to further explore how regions could best

provide their input, coordinate their work to help achieve the Global Forest Objectives, and exchange information on regional implementation to UNFF. The Bureau expressed the view that regionalization of the UNFF process could be a more desirable goal than convening regional meetings of UNFF. The Bureau considered that the CLI in Bali would be a very timely and useful meeting for clarifying these issues, as well. It was noted that greater inputs from groups were needed on these matters.

Regarding the *Interagency cooperation and CPF*, the Bureau took note of the analysis and recommendations provided in the Secretariat's discussion Note. Mr. Hoovegeen informed the members of an invitation extended to the CPF Heads to attend a meeting prior to UNFF 7 to discuss collaboration and cooperation on forests, as well as of an invitation to participate in a panel discussion at UNFF 7. Close involvement with the CSD was also expressed, particularly for the 2012/13 cycle, which will deal with forests.

Decisions Taken

- The Secretariat would revise the Note on the MYPOW, linking it with the NLBI and regional aspects. This should include different scenarios/options. Bureau members would consult with respective regions and provide feedback.
- The Secretariat would revise the Note on the Regional Dimensions, including information on regional mandates, organization and priority activities, frequency of sessions and membership of relevant regional forestry and economic commissions, organizations, processes, and partnerships, among others. Both Notes will be presented for the Bureau's consideration at its next meeting in October.
- The Secretariat would revise the Note on Interagency cooperation and CPF for the Bureau's consideration by early next year (before the Bali Country-Led Initiative). It should further elaborate on how to harmonize activities of the CPF members; identify the mandates of each CPF member and who exactly is dealing with what; and make the focal point arrangements more operational. It was also recommended to explore the possibility of convening an annual meeting with the Chairs of the CPF Governing Bodies.

5.2 Organizational matters

The Secretariat explained general principles of organizing the work of UNFF sessions, which typically included plenary and two working groups, with some *ad hoc* contact groups, as needed. Plenary meetings would consider matters of greater significance and/or complexities which are cross-cutting and relevant to those under consideration by different working groups, thus requiring full participation of members.

The Bureau agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a draft "Organization of Work" to schedule the work of UNFF 7 for the entire two weeks (16-27 April 2007), which would be considered by the Bureau at its next meeting. It agreed to divide the work into plenary and working groups. It was therefore agreed that a multi-stakeholder dialogue would be held in a plenary session. Since most of the substantive negotiations are done in two parallel working groups, it was also decided that, each day, the co-chairs would brief the other working group of progress made in their group. The two working groups would be based broadly along the following lines:

(i) Non-legally binding instrument

- a. The outcome of the AHEG, panel discussion of international law scholars, and finalization of the instrument
- (ii) **Institutional/organizational issues**
- a. Multi-year programme of work
 - b. Enhanced cooperation and coordination (including guidance to CPF)

6. Other matters

The Bureau welcomed the Country-Led Initiative (CLI) in Bali being organized by the Government of Indonesia, with support of the Government of Germany and other potential donor countries and organizations. The Bureau expressed its support of this meeting and decided to actively participate in it. It is expected that the CLI would help elaborate and develop a broader understanding of the concept and elements of the new MYPOW and its consideration and adoption at UNFF 7. Taking into account outcomes of the AHEG meeting in December and subject to a final decision by the Steering Committee, the following topics are proposed for the CLI: 1) Multi-year programme of work: consideration of new realities (i.e. global objectives) and identification of structure and key components; 2) Exploring ways to strengthen global-regional interactions in IAF: how to incorporate this dimension in the new MYPOW; 3) Linkage between NLBI and UNFF and implications for the MYPOW; and 4) Means of implementation. The CLI is scheduled for 13/14 -16 February 2007 in Bali, Indonesia. The Bureau also recommended that the meeting should be for four days to fully capitalize on the experience available at the CLI.

6.1 Closing of the meeting

Mr. Hoogeveen thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 12:45 pm on 25 August 2006 (second day of the meeting).