

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Tenth Session (UNFF10 Bureau)**

Minutes of the first meeting

Ankara, Turkey
Tuesday, 28 June 2011
10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Participation

Bureau members: Mr. Mario Ruales Carranza (Ecuador), Mr. Srecko Juricic (Croatia) Ms. Shuli Davidovich (Israel), Mr. Saiful Azam Martinus Abdullah (Malaysia), Ms. Anna M. C. Masinga (Zambia).

UNFF Secretariat: Ms. Jan McAlpine, Mr. Mahendra Joshi, Ms. Ivonne Higuero.

Secretary of the Forum: Ms. Vivian Pliner.

Others: Mr. Ismail Belen, Ms. Emine Atas, (Turkish General Directorate of Forestry), Ms. Aynur Ayden Coskun (Istanbul University), Mr. Adnan Altay ALTINÖRS (Permanent Mission of Turkey to the UN) as observers from the host country (Turkey) .

The provisional agenda of the first meeting of the Bureau included the following items:

1. Review of the outcomes of the UNFF9
2. Briefing on the joint meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau and the Chairpersons of functional commissions - February 2011
3. Preparations for the tenth session of the UNFF:
4. The UNFF intersessional activities on forest financing including the preparation for the second meeting of the ad hoc expert group on forest financing
5. Recent and upcoming events
6. Future meetings of the Bureau
7. Other matters

Opening of the meeting

Ms. Jan McAlpine, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, welcomed the members of the Bureau of UNFF10 to the first meeting of the Bureau. She underscored that this first meeting was being held in Ankara, Turkey, with a generous contribution from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Urbanization of the Government of Turkey, for which she expressed her appreciation to the Government of Turkey. Ms. McAlpine also informed the Bureau that a number of senior officials from Turkey had been invited to attend the meeting as “observers”.

Ms. McAlpine then briefed the Bureau on the historical context of the international forest policy process leading to the establishment of the current international arrangement on forests, including the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). She and Ms. Vivian Pliner, UNFF Secretary, then briefed the Bureau on the rules of procedure of the Forum, the working modalities of the Bureau and its interaction with the Secretariat.

As the Forum will formally elect the Chairman on the opening day of the tenth session in 2013 (exact dates to be decided by ECOSOC in July 2011), Ms. McAlpine requested the Bureau to consider nominating a Chairman from among the members to guide the deliberations of the Bureau until the formal election is held.

The Bureau members unanimously nominated Mr. Mario Ruales (Ecuador) to act as the Chair of the UNFF10 Bureau. Mr. Ruales accepted the invitation to chair the Bureau and thanked the Bureau members for their trust in him. He then chaired the rest of the meeting. He said that the UNFF10 has an important agenda ahead, and that the Bureau needs to meet the expectations of the Member States by working synergistically. Upon his proposal, the agenda of the meeting was adopted. He then invited the Turkish hosts to give a brief presentation on Turkey's forests and forestry.

Mr. Ismail Belen, Deputy Director-General of the General Directorate of Forestry, Turkey (OGM), expressed his warm welcome to Ankara, and thanked the Bureau for this opportunity to introduce the Bureau and the Secretariat to the forest management and institutional structure of his country.

1. Review of the outcomes of the UNFF9

Ms. McAlpine made a brief presentation on the outcomes of the ninth session of the UNFF (24 January – 4 February 2011). She highlighted that the main outcomes were the (i) Ministerial Declaration and its submission to Rio+20; (ii) the Omnibus resolution on all UNFF9 agenda items; and (iii) the global launch of the International Year of Forests (Forests 2011).

The Bureau members expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes of the UNFF9 and the need to follow up on its decisions, in particular in submitting the Ministerial Declaration to the Rio+20 process as its input. The Bureau also underscored the need to maintain the momentum of the IYF, including ways of improving public relations, outreach and interaction with the media. It suggested that the Secretariat make the website and other communication materials as user-friendly as possible. The Secretariat provided additional information on its ongoing activities and also clarified that the IYF-related activities are funded through the limited extra-budgetary resources. With the recent confirmation of the Norwegian contribution, the situation is expected to improve slightly.

On additional inquiries about the Bureau composition, its work and on the custom of rotational chairmanship, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the division of work among the present Bureau members in the conduct of the session's work will be elaborated at a time closer to the start of the session, and that the next Bureau of UNFF11 will be chaired by a member from Africa.

2. Briefing on the joint meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau and the Chairpersons of functional commissions - February 2011

A joint meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau and the Chairpersons of the Functional Commissions was held in New York on 16 February 2011. Mr. Saiful Azam Martinus Abdullah participated in that meeting, on behalf of the UNFF10 Bureau. He briefed the Bureau on the purpose and outcome of the meeting. Such a joint meeting is a regular feature to enhance cooperation and collaboration between ECOSOC and its functional commissions and among the functional

commissions, themselves. The joint meeting focused on the conceptualization of a framework for review of the MDGs in 2015, harmonizing the work of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies and broadening the scope of the AMRs. The meeting considered convening panel discussions during ECOSOC sessions, on issues of interest to the functional commissions, and to invite their Chairs to participate in the panels. The Bureau agreed on the need to work closely with ECOSOC and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council.

3. Preparations for the tenth session of the UNFF

Ms. McAlpine briefed the Bureau on the main issues on the agenda of the tenth session, its related documentation, the dates and venue of UNFF10, and on the offer by the Government of Turkey to host the tenth session. She underscored the importance of the Substantive Session of ECOSOC, to be held in July 2011, with regard to the dates and venue of the UNFF10 and the offer by the Government of Turkey to host the session in Istanbul, which will be decided by this upcoming session of ECOSOC in Geneva in July. In this regard, Ms. McAlpine informed the Bureau that the Secretariat met with Turkish officials on Monday, 27 June to discuss related procedural and substantive matters. This included the forthcoming decision by ECOSOC on the venue and dates, Turkey's commitment to defray the costs above the costs of holding the meeting in New York, a host-country agreement and other practical and operational aspects of convening the forum session outside of the UNHQs.

She mentioned that the overall theme of the UNFF10 is "Forests and Economic Development", with four sub-themes: (a) Forest products and services; (b) National forest programmes and other sectoral policies and strategies; (c) Reducing risks and impacts of disasters; and (d) benefits of forests and trees to urban communities. Another important item on the UNFF10 agenda is the Means of Implementation, in particular, the forest finance process. In addition, there will be the regular agenda items, including the progress made in the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (forest instrument), regional and subregional inputs, enhanced cooperation, the multi-stakeholder dialogue, Forum trust fund, etc. The Secretariat explained the process of documentation, participation and availability of travel support to representatives from eligible countries.

The Bureau considered ways of making the session more efficient and effective; and agreed with the suggestions of the Secretariat to maintain the current practice of streamlining official documentation and requesting the Government of Turkey to consider providing additional financial support to cover travel of representatives from the eligible Member States, according to the established rules and practices of the Forum. The Bureau agreed to continue reviewing the substantive preparations of the UNFF10 in its future Bureau meetings.

4. The UNFF intersessional activities on forest financing including the preparation for the second meeting of the ad hoc expert group on forest financing

Ms. McAlpine briefed the Bureau on the long-outstanding issues of forest finance and related landmark decisions of the UNFF9 Special Session (October 2009) and UNFF9 session (Jan-Feb 2011). As a result of those decisions, the Secretariat has started a four-year process with a number of activities on forest finance, including two Ad Hoc Expert Groups (the first has already met in 2010 in Nairobi), the Facilitative Process (FP), the intersessional process from UNFF9 to UNFF10, and the critical role of the UNFF10 in taking a meaningful/substantive/significant decision on forest finance. The process is based on the review of existing and emerging

financial mechanisms and sources, updating of the background report of 2008 by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)/Advisory Group on Finance (AGF), inputs from the CPF, submission of proposals by Member States and organizations, an Organization-led Initiative (OLI), informal consultations by Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) Co-Chairs, the conduct of the second AHEG meeting in late 2012 (before UNFF10), and a number of substantive activities related to the Facilitative Process. She also informed the Bureau on current Secretariat activities on FP that included a number of thorough analytical works on forest finance in low forest cover countries (LFCCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) with financial support from UK/Department of Financial Development (DFID) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and a new project, with Germany's support, for similar work on forest finance focused on Africa.

Ms. McAlpine informed the Bureau that in the recent CPF Retreat, held on 23-24 June in Orvieto, Italy, the CPF considered the requests from the UNFF resolutions on forest finance, including on the OLI. It welcomed the recognition of the Forum on the substantive work of the CPF and committed to support the work on forest finance, within the scope and available resources of the individual members of the Partnership. However, it also noted with some concern that, being a voluntary partnership, it has serious constraints to fulfil the un-funded mandates from and expectations of the Forum. She also informed the Bureau that the CPF is considering hosting the OLI around September 2012 (instead of by 1 June, as stated in the UNFF9 resolution) to give itself sufficient time to better organize the event. The CPF decided to prepare a detailed workplan with a timeline and division of work among its members, to respond to the Forum's invitation for its contribution on the forest finance process.

The Bureau welcomed the willingness and commitment of the Secretariat and the CPF members on forest finance, and encouraged their continued commitment. It also expressed its appreciation to donor countries and organizations for their support. The Bureau would continue to consult with Member States in advancing the process, inter alia, by encouraging them to submit their proposals and suggestions on time, as specified in the UNFF9 resolution

5. Recent and upcoming events

- i. CPF activities
- ii. Upcoming CLIs in 2011
- iii. Closing ceremony for the International Year of Forests
- iv. Rio+20 Conference

The Bureau was briefed on the recent and upcoming meetings and events, including the CPF retreat held the previous week in Orvieto, Italy, planned Country-led initiatives (CLI), the closing ceremony(ies) of IYF, and the Rio+20 Conference related activities.

In addition to the CPF plans for the forest finance process, as mentioned above, the CPF Retreat also considered: (a) its preparations for Forest Day 5, to be held in Durban, South Africa, during the UNFCCC COP in November 2011; (b) its ongoing works on SFM, including on streamlining reporting, forest degradation, and the global forest information system; (c) climate change- and biodiversity-related new financial mechanisms; (d) the process for the Forest Resources Assessment (FRA 2015); (e) the CPF Communication Network, and (f) CPF input to the Rio+20 process.

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that in the post-UNFF9 period, one CLI has already been held (the Japan/Indonesia CLI on SFM, in Tokyo, Japan, in March 2011) and that one is going to be held in Bonn, Germany in October, on the contributions of forests in a green economy. The latter is being convened by the Government of Germany in collaboration with other governments and organizations. The European Bureau members offered to ask about the Government of Germany's willingness to cover the travel costs of the UNFF Bureau to participate in the CLI. The Bureau was also informed of another CLI in Vietnam, which is in the pipeline and currently being considered.

On the closing ceremony (ies) for the IYF, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that it was planned to have one closing ceremony in Canada and another one in Sao Paulo, Brazil towards the end of the year. The Secretariat said that ideally there should be one closing ceremony in each region but resources were limited and they had to rely on the generosity of Governments offering to host the ceremonies in other regions.

6. Rio+20:

The Director advised against seeking major new negotiations on forests at Rio+20 because of the concern that it will be mostly ministers of environment attending, rather than those from Agriculture or Forestry, which are in many countries the dominant ministries. Perhaps the social and economic aspects of forests would not be considered, considering UNFF9's focus and the Ministerial Declaration itself.. The Chair noted that there were opportunities in the preparations for Rio+20 at the regional level for the Bureau members to participate.

7. Future meetings of the Bureau

The Bureau agreed that it should meet regularly. The Bureau also acknowledged the challenge of holding physical meetings due to the lack of funding from travel support to the eligible Bureau members. Based on the suggestion made by the Secretariat, the Bureau agreed that it should take advantage of holding Bureau meetings in the margins of other major events, and, where possible or needed, to use videoconferencing in addition to face-to-face meetings. Bureau members from developing countries and countries with economies in transition are eligible for travel support to Bureau meetings from the trust fund resources dedicated for that purpose. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that there is no such dedicated contribution from donors at present. That was one of the main reasons for the current meeting being organized in Ankara, as Turkey generously offered to cover all travel expenses of the Bureau members and some staff members.

The Bureau tentatively agreed to have a next meeting in November 2011. The exact dates for the meeting will be decided later based on the convenience of dates for all members and other logistical and funding issues.

8. Other matters

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of its challenges related to the staffing and Trust Fund situation.

The Bureau expressed their satisfaction with the work of the secretariat in preparations for UNFF10 and on forest finance; it also noted the current human and financial constraints of the Secretariat. Bureau members agreed to consult further among themselves on ways to address this serious constraint of staffing. The Bureau noted a need of additional funding for successful

preparations of the upcoming AHEG and UNFF10 meetings, and assured that they would approach Member States from the regions for their contributions. Two Bureau members from Missions in New York proposed holding a meeting with USG Zukang Sha to recommend posts being moved to UNFFS within DESA.

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Mario Ruales Carranza (Ecuador) (Chairman) thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting and the host, Turkey, for their generous support to the Bureau in convening this first meeting. He urged the members of the Bureau to be the channel of communication with their respective regions. On behalf of the Government of Turkey, Mr. Ismail Belen thanked the Bureau, the Secretariat and the members of the Government of Turkey for their hard work. Mr. Mario Ruales Carranza adjourned the meeting at 6:00 pm.