

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the Second Meeting of the UNFF11 Bureau (after the Eleventh Session)
8 March 2016 (5:00-8:00 pm) - Tokyo, Japan

Participation

Bureau Members: H.E. Mr. Noel Nelson Messone (Gabon), Mr. Wu Zhimin (China), Mr. Srecko Juricic (Croatia), Mr. Heikki Granholm (Finland)
Mr. Vicente Bezerra the Bureau member from Brazil was absent.

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Mr. Ryo Nakamura

Others: Mr. Thiago Medeiros da Cunha Cavalcanti (Ministry of External Relations of Brazil)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

- 1. The Secretariat was requested to inform the UNFF11 Bureau on the result of the action by the Council on the UNFF11 Chair's letter, for its further action if necessary.**

Provisional Agenda

- 1- Update on the action by the ECOSOC on the letter of the UNFF11 Chair to the ECOSOC President**
- 2- Preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1):**
 - i. AHEG1 organization of work**
 - ii. AHEG1 documentation**
 - iii. Nomination of AHEG Co-Chairs**
 - iv. Update on the funding for travel support of experts to AHEG1**
- 3- Update on the:**
 - i. GA resolution on the UN Forest Instrument**
 - ii. PBIs of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33**
 - iii. Activities of the GFFFN**
 - iv. International Day of Forests 2016**
- 4- Date and venue of the next Bureau meeting**
- 5- Other matters:**
 - i. The status of the UNFF Trust Fund resources in support of the intersessional activities.**

The Chair of the UNFF11 Bureau welcomed members of the Bureau to the meeting held on the margins of the expert panel on the Strategic Plan of the International Arrangement on Forests. He informed that Mr. Bezerra was not able to attend the meeting. The provisional agenda of the meeting was adopted. The Bureau welcomed the participation of Mr. Thiago Medeiros da Cunha Cavalcanti (Ministry of External Relations of Brazil) to observe the Bureau discussions on behalf of Mr. Bezerra.

1. Update on the action by the ECOSOC on the letter of the UNFF11 Chair to the ECOSOC President

The Bureau invited the Secretariat to provide update on the latest developments in regard to the ECOSOC action on the letter of the UNFF11 Chair to the ECOSOC President.

The Secretariat informed that the Secretary of the Forum was asked to attend this meeting and to brief the Bureau on this matter but, he was unable to join this Bureau meeting due to conflict of schedule with other meetings. The Secretariat informed, however, that based on the non-official information, ECOSOC was planning to take action on a draft decision on Monday 14 March 2016. According to this draft, the Council was authorizing the Forum to convene the 1st meeting of UNFF12 on 25 April to elect its Bureau. This information was also confirmed by some members of the UNFF11 Bureau who had the same information from their respective Missions in New York. There was a question by the Chair that there were three issues mentioned in his letter to the ECOSOC President, while, the draft decision contained only action on the election of the UNFF12 Bureau. The Chair proposed to contact the ECOSOC President to seek clarification on this matter. It was also proposed that a letter to be sent to the Secretary of the Forum, who also participated in the ECOSOC Bureau meetings as the Deputy Secretary of ECOSOC, to seek clarification on this matter. The Secretariat draw the attention of the Bureau members to the views of the Secretary of the Forum, as recorded in the minutes of the last meeting, that the provisional agenda of UNFF12 should not be adopted prior to the conclusion of the proceedings of the Forum's Working Group in view of the outcome of the Working Group established in accordance with paragraphs 46 and 47 of ECOSOC resolution 2015/33. The Secretariat also added that the date and venue of the resumed UNFF12 could be adopted at the ECOSOC substantive session scheduled in July.

The Bureau discussed thoroughly all the suggestions and also took account of the views of the Forum's Secretary recorded in the minutes of the last Bureau meeting and other explanations provided by the Secretariat. As the result, the Bureau decided to wait for the outcome of the ECOSOC meeting on 14 March and not to take any further action on this matter at this stage. The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for closely following up on the matter and took stock of the situation. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to convey the result of the consideration by the Council on this matter to the Bureau as soon as possible. In the event that ECOSOC authorizes the Forum to hold the first meeting of UNFF12, the Bureau emphasized the need for regional groups to nominate urgently their representatives to the UNFF12 Bureau. The Bureau requested this matter to be reflected in the notes of the Secretary of the Forum to the regional groups.

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

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1) scheduled to be convened from 25-27 April 2016 at UNHQ in New York.

i. AHEG1 organization of work

The Bureau considered the draft provisional organization of work for AHEG1 and proposed a number of suggestions, including on the order of the elements for substantive discussion. The Bureau also highlighted the importance of incorporating all elements of the IAF strategic plan, as stated in paragraph 39 of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, in the programme of work. The Bureau further considered possible options for the working modalities of AHEG1 to ensure sufficient time for discussion and active interaction among experts, including options of holding parallel working groups, modify the regular starting and/or finishing time of morning and afternoon sessions, as well as possible evening sessions. It was decided that the Secretariat would consult with the AHEG Co-Chairs and revise the programme of work and circulate it to the Bureau members at a later date.

ii. AHEG1 documentation

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that all official documentation and other relevant documents have been posted on the UNFF website. These include the Provisional Agenda and Annotations, a Note by the Secretariat, submitted views and proposals of Member States and other relevant stakeholders, and a background study on the "Elements for the Preparation of the Strategic Plan 2017-2030". The submitted views and proposals, as well as the study have been posted on the UNFF website before 15 February 2016 pursuant to the decision made at the last meeting of the Bureau.

The Secretariat further briefed that the compilation of views and proposals, as well as a summary of discussions of the expert panel on the Strategic Plan of the International Arrangement on Forests will also be posted to the Forum's website once these documents are prepared. The hard copies of the official documentation, i.e. the Provisional Agenda and Annotations and a Note by the Secretariat will be made available at the AHEG1.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the timely preparation of the AHEG1 documentation and other related documents, and expressed satisfaction on the quality of the information contained in these documents.

iii. Nomination of AHEG Co-Chairs

The Secretariat informed that Mr. Mr. Gholam Hossein Dehghani of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Mr. Hans Hoogeveen of the Netherlands have been nominated to serve as the Co-Chairs for the AHEG, from their respective groups.

iv. Update on the funding for travel support of experts to AHEG1

The Secretariat informed that the travel support will be provided to 37 experts nominated by the eligible countries and Major Groups to participate in the AHEG1. These travel support would be funded through the extrabudgetary funding support from Finland and Japan.

3. Update on the:

i. GA resolution on the UN Forest Instrument

The Secretariat informed that the General Assembly adopted the resolution A/RES/70/199 on 22 December 2015 that extended the timeline of the Global Objectives on Forests to 2030 and

renamed the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests the United Nations forest instrument.

ii. PBIs of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33

The Secretariat provided updates on the outcome of GA consideration of the programme budget implications (PBIs) of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33. Based on the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly approved four additional posts to deliver the new mandate for the duration of the mandate of the IAF. The recruitment process of these additional posts is underway. It was added that a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) sponsored by Japan was also expected to join the Secretariat by April 2016.

The Bureau recorded its thanks to the Secretariat for its efforts in closely following up on this matter.

iii. Activities of the GFFFN

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the activities of the GFFFN, noting that while the GFFFN will need voluntary contributions for its full operation, the Secretariat secured over USD400.000 from the UN Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation to partially fund the implementation of its capacity building and project formulation activities in pilot countries (Cameroon and Senegal). The Secretariat is actively seeking to secure additional funding through donor contributions and internal sources to expand the GFFFN activities to extend its support to a larger number of countries that have already expressed their interest in its activities.

The Secretariat further briefed the Bureau on a consultation meeting with the team from the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility held in February 2016 at UNHQ in New York to explore the possibility of providing assistance to other eligible countries in accessing financing for sustainable forest management. The Secretariat also initiated a contact with the Secretariat of the Green Climate Fund to explore the possibility for collaboration. Furthermore, the ongoing consultations with China focus on the long-term funding to support the operation of the GFFFN.

Mr. Wu informed that relevant ministries of China agreed in principle to host the GFFFN unit in China and are currently considering the possible arrangement to share the cost for project activities with partners for the GFFFN, while the operating cost for the unit to be established in China would be covered by China.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in operationalizing the GFFFN, noting the ongoing efforts by China to provide a long-term funding to support the GFFFN as a welcoming development. It was agreed to give consideration to organizing a side event or a roundtable discussion on the activities of the GFFFN during the AHEG1 in view of the wide interest expressed by countries and multilateral funding agencies in its activities. The Bureau also emphasized on the need to continue to mobilize voluntary contributions from donors to support the activities of the GFFFN, including a possible meeting with them during AHEG1.

iv. International Day of Forests 2016

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the upcoming event for the 2016 celebration of the

International Day of Forests. A joint celebration of the International Day of Forests and World Water Day entitled “Forests and Water | Sustain Life and Livelihoods” will be held on Monday, 21 March 2016 from 10:00 to 13:00 at UNHQ in New York. Featured speakers include: Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; H.E. Oh Jooch, President of ECOSOC and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN; and H.E. Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN. The event also includes a panel discussion on Forests, Water and Economic Development and a general discussion on forest and water in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The media campaign will be launched on 20 March to show the important linkages between forests and water.

4. Date and venue of the next Bureau meeting

Subject to the decision of the ECOSOC on authorizing the first meeting of UNFF12 to elect its Bureau, the Bureau proposed that the first meeting of the UNFF12 Bureau could be convened immediately after the conclusion of the AHEG1 on 27 April 2016 at UNHQ in New York.

5. Other matters:

i. The status of the UNFF Trust Fund resources in support of the intersessional activities

The Secretariat provided the briefing on the available resources of the UNFF Trust Fund, highlighting the decreasing trend in contribution by donor countries to the Trust Fund. The Secretariat informed that conference rooms have tentatively been reserved from 7-9 September 2016 for the second meeting of AHEG (AHEG2). However, as stands now, there are no resources to fund the participation of eligible experts at this meeting. If this situation continues, there would be no AHEG2. In this regard, the Secretariat emphasized the need for donor countries to provide urgent contribution to the UNFF Trust Fund for this purposes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.