

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Bureau of the Eleventh Session
23 February 2014 (10.00 am – 1.00 pm), and 5:15 pm-7:00 pm, 25 February 2014 Conference Room
5- UNON
Nairobi, Kenya

Participation

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

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Mita Sen, Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Mr. Benjamin Singer, Mr. Tomasz Juszcak, Mr. David Henderson-Howat.

Others: Ms. Mari Ahmed (Finland)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

1. To ensure that Ministers attending the High Level Segment (HLS) at UNFF11 had a clear understanding of the key issues for their consideration, the Bureau decided, at its next meeting, to further consider presenting a text on the “building blocks/focus areas” as a means to facilitate the deliberations of, and an outcome for the HLS of UNFF11.
2. The Bureau decided that after the conclusion of the work of the IAF Independent Assessment Team, and in preparation for AHEG2, to seek, on a voluntary basis and without providing any format or template, further views and proposals from governments and other stakeholders on the future option for the IAF.
3. The Bureau agreed that the second meeting of the AHEG on the IAF would be held in New York on 12-16 January 2015.
4. The Bureau agreed to hold its fourth meeting in New York during the last week of June or the first week of July 2014.

Provisional Agenda
3rd meeting of the UNFF11 Bureau

- 1- Preparations for the eleventh session of UNFF (UNFF11) - Documentation
- 2- Progress in the implementation of the intersessional activities on the international arrangement on forests (IAF):
 - a. Ad Hoc Expert Group on the IAF
 - i. Nomination of the Co-Chairs of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG) on the IAF
 - ii. Key inputs to AHEG1
 - iii. Review of the key activities and tasks during AHEG1 on the IAF
 - iv. Date for AHEG2
 - b. Independent Assessment of the IAF: Progress report by the Co-Facilitators and the Consultants on their work and future plans
 - c. Major Groups Initiative
- 3- Recent and upcoming events
 - a. Technical expert meeting on “UNFF Reporting Format”
 - b. 8th session of the SDG Open Working Group on forests, and its future negotiation plan
 - c. CPF meeting
 - d. Proposed CLIs
- 4- Date of the next meeting of the Bureau
- 5- Other matters:
 - a. Update on the funding status of UNFFS and the appointment of its new Director
 - b. Joint meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau and Chairpersons of the Functional Commissions

The Chair of the UNFF11 Bureau Ambassador Macharia Kamau opened the meeting, welcomed members of the Bureau to Kenya and invited them to adopt the provisional agenda for the third meeting of the Bureau. The provisional agenda was adopted.

1. Preparations for the eleventh session of UNFF (UNFF11) - Documentation

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on and distributed the list of the official documentation for UNFF11. The Secretariat informed that the official documents for UNFF11 are going to be prepared based on the provisional agenda of UNFF11, adopted at the last session of UNFF10. The Bureau considered ways of making official documentation for the session more efficient and effective, and agreed with the suggestions of the Secretariat to maintain the current practice of streamlining official documentation. Accordingly, there will be four SG Reports: the first report on reviewing the effectiveness of the IAF and considering all future options, to serve the discussions on items 3a, 3c and 8 of the provisional agenda of UNFF11; the second report on item 3b on the review of the progress toward achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests; the third report on item 4 on the means of implementation for sustainable forest management and forest law enforcement and governance at all levels; and the fourth report on items 5 and 6 on enhanced cooperation, policy and programme coordination, and regional and sub-regional inputs. There will be also two Notes by the Secretariat on items 7 and 9 on the multi-stakeholder dialogue and the UNFF Trust Fund. There will also be some additional documents including an Information Note on the CPF Framework, and background papers consisting of the IAF Independent Assessment Report, the reports of AHEG1 and AHEG2, and reports of the CLIs (provided they had been forwarded by the respective country's Permanent Representative to the SG by the end of December 2014).

The Secretariat also reminded the Bureau that UNFF11 will include a “high level segment” which requires early preparation. The Secretariat reminded of the past practice, e.g. the UNFF9 ministerial segment for which the Bureau of UNFF9 prepared a text on “Building Blocks for UNFF9 Ministerial Declaration”. The UNFF11 Bureau also emphasized the need to ensure that Ministers attending the High Level Segment at UNFF11 had a clear understanding of the key issues for their consideration. Recognising the importance of the successful outcome from UNFF11 for the future IAF, Bureau members decided, at its next meeting, to further consider presenting a text, in advance of UNFF11, on the “building blocks/focus area” to facilitate the deliberations of, and an outcome for the HLS of UNFF11.

2. Progress in the implementation of the intersessional activities on the international arrangement on forests (IAF)

The Bureau was joined for this item on the agenda by the prospective AHEG co-chairs (Mr. Charles Barber and Mr. Raymond Landveld), by the co-facilitators for the IAF independent assessment (Ambassador Saiful Abdullah and Mr. Hans Hoogeveen) and by the consultants (Mr. Mafa Chipeta, Mr. Juergen Blaser, Mr. Jorge Illueca, Mr. Ricardo Umali and Mr. Maxim Lobovikov).

a. Ad Hoc Expert Group on the IAF

i. Nomination of the Co-Chairs of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG) on the IAF

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that Mr. Barber (USA) and Mr. Landveld (Suriname) have been officially nominated by their respective groups as the chairs of the AHEG. The official election of the AHEG co-chairs would be conducted at the first session of AHEG1 on the morning of 24 February.

ii. Key inputs to AHEG1

The Secretariat outlined the documentation for AHEG1 which includes the provisional agenda, a Secretariat Note and the compilation of views and proposals on the IAF. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that 46 views from 43 countries, two major groups and the EU (on behalf of its 28 members) have been submitted, which are included in the compilation. The Secretariat explained that, due to its length, the compilation was being made available to experts on a CD (as well as being on the UNFF website). This CD also contains all background documents and resolutions related to the IAF. It was noted that no CPF member responded to the invitation to submit views and proposals on the IAF. This is partly due to the fact that as the CPF itself is part of the review of the IAF. The Bureau, however, called for active contribution of the CPF member organizations to the IAF review process.

iii. Review of key activities and tasks during AHEG1 on the IAF

The Secretariat explained the organization of work of AHEG1 including the arrangements for the opening session of AHEG1. The Bureau was pleased to learn that Professor Judi Wangalwa Wakhungu, the Cabinet Secretary for Water, Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya, as well as Mr. Thomas Gass, the Assistant Secretary-General of DESA would be making welcoming remarks. The Bureau was informed that the Kenyan Government would host a reception on the evening of Monday, 24 February.

iv. Date for AHEG2

The Secretariat informed the Bureau of its follow-up in securing the conference services in New York for the second meeting of the AHEG. Based on this explanation, the Bureau agreed with the suggestion of the Secretariat to hold the second mAHEG2 on 12-16 January 2015 in New York. The Bureau also discussed the usefulness of providing another opportunity at an appropriate time to countries and other stakeholders to provide further views and proposals on the IAF to supplement their initial views, or to provide their views for the first time. To this end, the Bureau recognised the importance of not overburdening countries, and decided that after the conclusion of the work of the IAF Independent Assessment Team and in preparation for AHEG2, to seek, on a voluntary basis and without providing any format or template, further views and proposals on future options for the IAF. The Secretariat will advise on the best deadline for submission of these views so as to ensure proper and timely submission of these views to AHEG2.

b. Independent Assessment of the IAF: Progress report by the Co-Facilitators and the Consultants on the their work and future plan

The co-facilitators reported on the progress in the work of the IAF Independent Assessment Team; in particular, for the activities undertaken after the Vienna Workshop. They informed the Bureau about the details of their discussions and programmes during their second substantive meeting in January 2014 in New York, which included a series of meetings and interviews with government representatives, CPF member organizations, major groups and UN officials. They also provided the Bureau with their plan for active involvement in the work of AHEG1, as well as the timeline of their activities for preparation and finalization of the final IAF Independent Assessment Report. The IAF Team informed the Bureau of the finalization of the Inception Report by the IAF Team. This Report will provide a reference and information source for their work in preparation and finalization of their eventual report, and contains basic information about the IAF review process and its components, information about the methodology, and the work plan for the IAF team, etc. The Co-Facilitators informed the Bureau that they would provide an oral report on the progress on their work at the opening session of AHEG1 on 24 February. In addition to their involvement in the actual discussions of AHEG1, the IAF Team will use AHEG1 to further coordinate among members of the Team on details of its work, including developing the draft outlines for the IAF Independent Assessment Report.

The IAF Team also informed that they were planning further meetings and a teleconference with the CPF member organizations in the margins of AHEG1. The co-facilitators added that, following AHEG1, the Team will move from the information-gathering phase into the analytical phase; they emphasised that the consultants were adopting an innovative approach, and would be presenting a thorough analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different options. The IAF Team indicated that they would work hard to make sure to produce a draft report to the Bureau meeting in late June or the first week of July 2014. At this point, the IAF Team looked forward to comments from the Bureau, in order to ensure quality control and consistency of the draft with the Terms of Reference, as agreed by the Bureau. The IAF Team will then use the remaining period to address observations from the Bureau and all issues related to editing and final processing of the report, and submit its final report by mid-September 2014 to the Bureau and the Secretariat.

The Bureau welcomed the progress that has been made in the work of the IAF Team and emphasized the significance of this work for the IAF review process, and the need for timely submission of the eventual report. The Bureau also stressed the need for the IAF Team to take a forward-looking and strategic approach in their report. The Bureau also agreed that on Thursday morning, it would circulate the draft outline of the IAF Independent Assessment Report among AHEG1 participants. The Bureau also agreed to post the Inception Report on the UNFF website later.

c. Major Groups Initiative

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the arrangements that it made for holding the major groups initiative in January 2014 in New York. This had provided an opportunity for the major groups to discuss their input to the review of the IAF, and coordinate their effective involvement in the discussions in AHEG1. More importantly, they held a specific meeting with the IAF independent assessment consultant and directly exchanged views with them on their suggestions for improving the involvement of the major groups in the future IAF. The Secretariat also distributed a brief note about this meeting among the Bureau members. The Bureau noted with thanks this report and emphasized the importance of the engagement of major groups in the IAF review process.

3. Recent and upcoming events

a. Technical expert meeting on the “UNFF Reporting Format”

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that paragraph 12(b) of resolution 10/1 requires the Secretariat to work to further streamline the reporting guidelines and format for voluntary national reporting to UNFF11. To this end, the Secretariat held a meeting with technical experts from CPF member organizations and independent experts on 14-15 January in New York. The main objective was to produce a more user-friendly questionnaire format which avoids overlap with information collected by (e.g.) the Rio Conventions and FAO. In conjunction with AHEG1 in Nairobi, the Secretariat is also planning to convene a meeting with countries and CPF member organizations to further solicit their views on improving the reporting format. There would be further discussion of the current draft with Member States in the margins of AHEG1; thereafter, the questionnaire would be revised and sent to Member States in June 2014, with a request for submission of the national reports to the Secretariat by the end of September 2014. It was noted that while FRA2015 will not be published until autumn 2015, FAO had agreed to make preliminary data available for use in preparing the UNFF11 Secretary-General’s Report on the progress toward achievement of the global objectives on forests and the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. A brief information note on the discussions and result of the technical meeting in New York was circulated among the Bureau members.

b. 8th session of the SDG Open Working Group on forest, and its future negotiation plan

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that during the recent OWG discussion many references had been made to the Forest Instrument (NLBI), the GOFs, the need to integrate forests into the SDGs, and the need for the OWG to coordinate its work with the UNFF IAF review process. To this end, the Secretariat's summary of key points made about forests during the 8th session of the OWG was made available to the Bureau. The Secretariat also provided the recently released document by the Co-Chairs of the OWG in which they have identified 19 potential Focus areas for the SDGs. Forests featured, not as a separate focus area, but most strongly in Focus area 17 (Ecosystems and biodiversity). The Secretariat also informed the Bureau of the work of the CPF in producing a two-page summary, proposing forest-related targets for integration into the SDGs. Ambassador Kamau explained that while the OWG was developing high level goals, it would need to rely on others to develop targets and indicators. In this context, the Bureau asked the Secretariat to distribute the CPF Summary Paper on *Forest Related Targets for Integration in Sustainable Development Goals* to experts during the first day of AHEG1, as it helps the meeting to further promote synergy and interlinkages between the work of the OWG and the IAF review process.

c. CPF meeting

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the recent meeting of the CPF which was held in conjunction with the 8th session of the OWG /SDGs in New York, as well the side event organized by the CPF. Following this meeting, the CPF finalized a two-page summary in which it proposed ten forest-related targets for integration into the SDGs. The Bureau considered it important that CPF members should actively contribute to the IAF review process and strengthen their relationships and commitment to the IAF. In this context, the Bureau also discussed the possibility of those Bureau members that attend the COFO meeting to convey this message to the CPF.

d. Proposed CLIs

The Secretariat drew the attention of the Bureau to two proposed CLIs: one organised by Switzerland on Forest Governance & Decentralisation in February 2015, and one organised by China. Mr. Wu said the main objective of this CLI is to facilitate the work of AHEG2 and UNFF11, and while the specific title for this CLI has not yet been finalized, future options for the IAF will be among the main issues for this CLI. China was providing a platform and organising logistics for this CLI, but would work with a Steering Committee on its substantive content, and with some co-sponsors to fund this CLI. He indicated that there will be an informal meeting to further discuss the details and timing of this CLI during AHEG1.

4. Date of the next meeting of the Bureau

The Bureau agreed to hold its fourth meeting in New York during the last week of June or the first week of July 2014. The Secretariat will coordinate with Bureau members on the exact timing of this meeting.

5. Other matters

a. Update on the funding status of UNFFS and appointment of its new Director

The Secretariat explained that, despite focusing on core activities relating to the IAF review, there was a potential funding deficit during the next two years unless additional donor funding was made available. In that regard, Mr Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General, DESA, had had a productive meeting with

potential donors on 24 February. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to update the Bureau on the funding requirement for the intersessional activities leading up to UNFF11 at its next meeting. The Secretariat also updated the Bureau on the process for selection of a new UNFF Director.

b. Joint meeting with the ECOSOC Bureau

The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the next joint meeting of the ECOSOC Bureau with the Chairs of the Functional Commissions of ECOSOC would be held on 3 March 2014 in New York. The Chair of the UNFF11 Bureau indicated that, unfortunately, there was a clash of dates with a critical OWG meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1.00 pm on 23 February, resumed at 5.15 pm on 25 February and concluded at 7.00 pm on 25 February.