

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Bureau of the Eleventh Session
1 July 2014 (10:00 am – 5:00 pm), New York

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 (Brazil)

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Ms. Afsa Kemitale, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Mita Sen, Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Mr. Tomasz Juszcak, Mr. Ryo Nakamura, Mr. David Henderson-Howat

Others: Ambassador Bibalou and Ms. Allegra Bongo (Mission of Gabon)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

1. The Bureau decided that:
 - a. UNFF11 would have two negotiated outcomes, namely, a Ministerial Declaration, and an “omnibus” Resolution inclusive of the decision on the future of the IAF and any other issues.
 - b. The High-Level Segment of UNFF11 would be held on 13-14 May 2015.
 - c. Input on suggested building blocks for the UNFF11 HLS Ministerial Declaration would be solicited from Member States, with the deadline of 30 January 2015.
 - d. A second round of views and proposals on the IAF would be solicited from Member States and relevant stakeholders, on a voluntary basis, with a deadline of 5 December 2014.
 - e. The next Bureau meeting would be held on 1 November 2014 in Beijing, China.

Provisional Agenda
4th meeting of the UNFF11 Bureau
10:00 am – 5:30 pm, 1 July 2014
New York

- 1- Preparations for the eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11)
 - a. Expected outcomes of UNFF11
 - b. Preparations for the High-Level Segment (HLS) of UNFF11, including the date, outcome, format
 - c. Side events at UNFF11
 - d. Travel of representatives to UNFF11 – budgetary update
- 2- Progress in the implementation of the intersessional activities on the international arrangement on forests (IAF):
 - a. Update on the status of the Co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on the IAF
 - b. Independent Assessment of the IAF: Progress report by the Co-Facilitators and the Consultants on the their work and future plan
 - c. Date for soliciting 2nd/complementary views and proposals on the IAF
- 3- Other intersessional activities
 - a. Facilitative process project on Harnessing Climate Change Funding for SFM
 - b. Facilitative Process project on Developing National Action Plans for Implementation of the Forest Instrument
 - c. Format for voluntary national reports to UNFF11
- 4- Recent and upcoming events
 - a. SDGs and the Post-2015 development agenda
 - b. COFO 22 and World Forest Week (23-27 June 2014)
 - c. CPF meeting (22 June 2014)
 - d. Chinese and Swiss Country-Led Initiatives
 - e. First United Nations Environment Assembly
- 5- Date of the next meeting of the Bureau
- 6- Other matters:
 - a. Update on the budgetary, staffing and administrative status of the UNFF Secretariat
 - b. Arrangements for briefing Member States on 2 July 2014

The Chair of the UNFF11 Bureau welcomed members of the Bureau to the meeting, and paid tribute to his predecessor (Ambassador Macharia Kamau). He thanked the members of the UNFF11 Bureau and the Secretariat for their work to date and noted that good progress had been made. He stressed the importance of preparations for UNFF11. The provisional agenda was adopted, subject to the additional items 3c, 4e and 6b proposed by the Secretariat.

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

a. Expected outcomes of UNFF11

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on past practice, in particular, the outcomes of those sessions of the Forum that included a high-level segment. After extensive discussions, the Bureau decided that there should be two negotiated outcomes from UNFF11, namely a Ministerial Declaration and an “omnibus” Resolution. The Ministerial Declaration would convey high-level political messages which would help raise the profile of forests in the post-2015 development agenda. The “omnibus” Resolution would be inclusive of the decision of the Forum on the future of the IAF, as well as any other relevant issue.

b. Preparations for the High-Level Segment (HLS) of UNFF11, including the date, outcome, format

Following discussion, the Bureau decided that the HLS would take place in the second week of UNFF11, on 13-14 May 2015. In regard to the discussion on the date of the HLS, Mr. Granholm of Finland asked the Secretariat to provide more information about key agenda items for future Bureau meetings in advance, in order to help members prepare themselves for the discussion.

To ensure an open and transparent preparatory process for the UNFF11 Ministerial Declaration, the UNFF11 Bureau also decided to solicit input from Member States of the Forum on the building blocks for the Declaration. It was also agreed that the deadline for submission of these inputs would be 30 January 2015. Based on these inputs, the Bureau would then prepare the building blocks on the basis of which it would develop a draft Ministerial Declaration, to be submitted and negotiated at UNFF11.

c. Side events at UNFF11

The Secretariat explained how it had planned side events at previous sessions of the Forum. Given the constraints of space and the cost implications of organizing side events in New York, there was normally a maximum of two side events per day during lunchtime. The usual arrangement has been to open up requests for side-events 3-4 months in advance of the Forum session and to close 2 months before the session in order to allow time to review proposals, and, where appropriate, suggest mergers. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that it would take similar measures in regard to the UNFF11 side events.

d. Travel of representatives to UNFF11 – budgetary update

The Secretariat noted that the dedicated Trust Fund resources were used to cover the expenses of delegates travelling to UNFF sessions from developing countries and countries in transition. There have been a number of expected pledges to the Trust Fund, but at present no dedicated funds had been received to meet these costs.

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

a. Update on the status of the Co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on the IAF

The Secretariat noted that Mr. Charles Barber would continue as the Co-Chair at AHEG2. Although Mr. Barber no longer works for the US State Department, the UN Office of Legal Affairs has confirmed that, as a member of the US delegation attending the AHEG, he can remain in his role as Co-Chair.

b. Independent Assessment of the IAF: Progress report by the Co-Facilitators and Consultants on the their work and future plan (meeting with co-facilitators and consultants)

The Bureau was joined for this item on the agenda by Mr. Hans Hoogeveen (co-facilitator for the IAF independent assessment team) and by the consultants (Mr. Mafa Chipeta, Mr. Juergen Blaser, Mr. Jorge Illueca, Mr. Ricardo Umali and Mr. Maxim Lobovikov). The other co-facilitator (Ambassador Saiful Abdullah) sent his apologies.

Mr. Hoogeveen explained that the independent assessment team had carried out its work by interviewing stakeholders, analysing key documents and exchanging views between themselves at a number of meetings. He also mentioned that the work is progressing very well and that the Team will submit its report by the stated deadline of mid-September 2014. On behalf of the consultants, Mr. Blaser then made a substantive presentation. He presented a first overview, based on the zero-draft, with initial findings on the key achievements and challenges of the current IAF, as well as options and buildings blocks for the future IAF. The Bureau thanked the team for the work they have done so far. It was noted that the team would send a first draft of their report to the Bureau at the end of August; and that an advanced unedited version of the final report would be published in mid-September, as planned before.

c. Date for soliciting 2nd/complementary views and proposals on the IAF

The Bureau agreed that it would invite, on a voluntary basis, a second round of views and proposals on the IAF, to be submitted by 5 December 2014. There will be no specific format for submission of such views. The Secretariat will submit the compilation of these views to AHEG2.

3. *Other intersessional activities*

a. *Facilitative Process Project on Harnessing Climate Change Funding for SFM*

The Secretariat reported on a the Facilitative Process project that is underway to assist decision makers in developing countries to harness funds from new and emerging sources for forest financing, including REDD+, with a view to implementing SFM more effectively. This project is being financed by the UN Development Account.

b. *Facilitative Process Project on Developing National Action Plans for Implementation of the Forest Instrument*

In addition, the Secretariat reported on this proposed project, which aims to strengthen national capacities to develop national action plans to implement the Forest Instrument. It will also be financed by the UN Development Account, and the Project Document is currently being finalised.

The Secretariat informed that these projects were developed in response to the UNFF9 resolution, and that they are being implemented in collaboration with a number of CPF member organizations. It was also added that these are policy-oriented and not technical field projects, and are being carried out as part of the activities of the UNFF Facilitative Process.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat and requested Fact Sheets on both these projects, recognising that they had been mandated by UNFF and that they would support the Member States in implementation.

c. *Format for voluntary national reports to UNFF11*

The Secretariat noted that pursuant to the UNFF10 resolution, the streamlined national reporting format was prepared and developed in close collaboration with CPF member organizations and country experts. This format and relevant guidelines had been transmitted to the Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations in New York and to the UNFF National Focal Points on 2 June 2014, with a cover letter from DESA USG Mr. Wu Hongbo. The deadline for submission of national reports was 30 September 2014. It was stressed that this information would provide a critical input to UNFF11, and for preparation of official documentation for the session. The Chair invited Bureau members to encourage countries in their regional groups to submit reports in a timely manner.

4. *Recent and upcoming events*

a. *SDGs and the Post-2015 development agenda*

The Secretariat noted that a revised zero draft of the SDGs had been released on 30 June and that two of the proposed targets refer explicitly to forests, namely:

- 15.2 by 2030, ensure the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, and increase reforestation by x% globally

- 15.b mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management, and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance sustainable forest management, including for conservation and reforestation

The Secretariat informed that the CPF is making efforts to include explicit reference to forests in the title of goal 15, and that CPF members had developed input on this draft. The Bureau agreed that, in discussions about SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda, there is a continuing need to raise the visibility of forests, emphasising their multi-functional role, the importance of sustainable management of forests, the need to reverse forest loss and the importance of financing SFM. The Secretariat informed that, in preparation of the latest text of 30 June 2014, the OWG Secretariat consulted the UNFF Secretariat about details of forest-related targets in the SDGs negotiating draft.

b. COFO 22 and World Forest Week (23-27 June 2014)

The Secretariat reported on discussions that had taken place at COFO 22, where DESA ASG Mr. Thomas Gass made an opening statement on behalf of UNFF. There had been discussions at COFO about securing adequate visibility of forests in the SDGs and having appropriate targets and indicators; and there had been discussions about the review of IAF which has been entirely focused on the CPF.

c. CPF meeting (22 June 2014)

The Secretariat reported that the key substantive issues discussed at the 22 June meeting of the Partnership were strategizing on integrating forests in the SDGs, and the ongoing review of the IAF. With regard to the IAF review, DESA ASG Mr. Thomas Gass emphasised the importance of input from CPF members on providing a future vision for the Partnership. In this regard, a number of individual CPF members had indicated that they intend to submit views and proposals on the review of the IAF; some of them will await the report of the independent assessment team before they do so.

d. Chinese and Swiss CLIs

Mr. Wu updated the Bureau on preparations for the CLI on the options for the IAF beyond 2015, to be held in Beijing, China on 29-31 October 2014. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on preparations for the CLI on Forest Governance & Decentralisation, to be held in Switzerland on 3-6 February 2015.

e. First United Nations Environment Assembly

The Secretariat reported on the First United Nations Environment Assembly, held in Nairobi on 23-27 June 2014, noting in particular the launch of the East Africa Initiative on Illegal Timber Trade and REDD+.

5. *Date of the next meeting of the Bureau*

The Bureau provisionally agreed to hold its fifth meeting on 1 November 2014.

6. *Other matters*

a. *Update on the budgetary, staffing and administrative status of UNFF Secretariat*

The Secretariat reported that Dr. Manoel Sobral Filho had been appointed as Director of UNFF with effect from 1 September 2014. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau about the process for recruitment of other vacant posts. The Secretariat further explained that given the demands of preparing for UNFF11, it is important to have a fully staffed Secretariat; and for this, the expected pledges from China, Finland, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation and the USA are needed to be in the UNFF Trust Fund as soon as possible.

b. *Arrangements for briefing Member States*

The Secretariat reminded the Bureau that the Chair would hold an informal briefing for the Permanent Missions in New York on 2 July 2014. The Chair intended to report on the Bureau decisions about the proposed outcomes from UNFF11, the dates for the HLS, the proposals for inviting suggestions regarding the Ministerial Declaration, and the invitation to submit second round views and proposals on the IAF. He would also encourage Member States to respond to the request for voluntary national reports and to continue to urge greater visibility of forests in the SDGs. In addition he would highlight the urgent financing needs for the Trust Fund.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm on 1 July 2014.