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Mahendra Joshi

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Dear Mr. Joshi,

In reference to the letter from Ms. Jan McAlpine, former Director of the UNFF Secretariat, dated 16 July 2013, I am pleased to hereby send you the Swedish national report on the views and proposals on the international arrangement on forests. Please feel free to distribute the report and post on the web, as you deem necessary and appropriate.

The enclosed report focuses on the experiences and lessons learned, from a Swedish perspective, on the effectiveness of the current international arrangement on forests. Sweden believes that it is too premature, at this stage, to state a preference for options for a possible future arrangement on forests. However, my colleagues and myself look forward to the results of the independent review currently being carried out by consultants, as well as the upcoming discussions at meetings of the ad hoc Expert Group on International Arrangement on Forests.

I wish to thank you and your hard working team in the UNFF Secretariat for a successful year marked by, amongst other things, the celebration of the first International Day on Forests and the tenth session of the Forum.

Allow me also to extend my personal gratitude for your commitment to global forest policy and the UNFF over the past fifteen years. You will be dearly missed by forest friends around the world as you retire early next year.

I wish you and your family a joyful holiday season and best wishes for 2014.

Warmest regards,


Mia Crawford

Encl.: Swedish National Report: Views and Proposals on the IAF

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**Swedish National Report: Views and Proposals on the
International Arrangement on Forests**

Summary

Sweden welcomes the review of the effectiveness of the current International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). It provides an opportunity to reassess the global forest policy dialogue in light of past performance and at the same time address current and future global challenges and opportunities of relevance to forests. Some of the major achievements with the current IAF include a Forum with universal membership tackling forest policy holistically and the establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. However, the current arrangement also lack real progress on the ground and stakeholders are left behind. Looking into the future, Sweden would like to stress the need to consider a broad range of options with the view of positioning any future IAF in the context of the post 2015 development agenda.

Introduction

Sweden, as a member of the European Union, aligns itself with the joint EU submission.

This report focuses on the experiences and lessons learned from a Swedish perspective on the effectiveness of the current International Arrangement on Forests. The report follows the broad framework of the reporting format provided by the Secretariat. The report has been developed by the Ministry for Rural Affairs in close cooperation and coordination with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Enterprises, Energy and Communications and the Ministry of the Environment. The report has also benefited from input from the Swedish Forest Agency, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. In addition, some key national stakeholders have been consulted. These stakeholders represent forest industry, private family forest owners and environmental non-governmental organizations, as well as academia.

Section A: Full range of options for the International Arrangement on Forests

Sweden welcomes the review of the effectiveness of the current International Arrangement on Forests (IAF). It provides an opportunity to reassess the global forest policy dialogue in light of past performance and at the same time address current and future global challenges and opportunities of relevance to forests.

The world has considerably changed since the start of the global forest policy dialogue at the Earth Summit in 1992. However, the current IAF is still a reflection of the “forest track” that was set out in Rio by the Forest Principles and later further developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and the UN Forum on Forests.

Sweden, being a forest rich country, with approximately two thirds of the country’s land mass covered by forests, has long realized the interconnectivity of forest policy at home and abroad. Currently, Sweden is ranked as the world’s third-largest exporter of saw timber products and paper, and the world’s fifth-largest exporter of pulp¹. Forests are important for Swedish prosperity and identity, the wellbeing of its people and conservation of nature.

In 2011 the Swedish government declared a forest vision accompanied with an action plan, this initiative is called the *Forest Kingdom: with values for the world*². The Forest Kingdom is based on the sustainable use of forests and ensuring a balanced approach to both the protection of the environment, while at the same time maintaining a high level of production. Striking this balance is not always an easy task and sharing information, exchange on lessons learned as well as good practices with other countries is one of the tasks included in the action plan. Moreover, it highlights the important role that sustainably managed forests play in contributing to poverty reduction, food security, combating global warming and the loss of biological diversity. The action plan also includes targets, such as increasing export of forest products and technical know-how by 20% for 2020.

Currently, the Swedish Government Offices and the Swedish Forest Agency are involved in many different forest policy processes at the sub-regional, regional and international levels. In addition, Sweden is cooperating both bilaterally and multi-laterally on forest related issues with many countries around the world through many international organizations and directly through various MoU:s. This support is

¹ Swedish Forestry. Information brochure from the Government Offices of Sweden. Available on-line: <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/16151/a/202396>

² The Forest Kingdom – with values for the world. Action plan from the Government Offices of Sweden. Available on-line: <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/14108/a/178773>

often channeled through the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Sweden is greatly concerned about the policy fragmentation of forest at different levels. The review of the effectiveness of the IAF is an opportunity to look at the bigger forest governance picture. This review could not come at a more opportune time, since during 2015 much of the focus of the international community will be on the development of the post 2015 development agenda, building on the experience of the MDGs and the development of SDGs, as well as the development of a new global climate change agreement. Hence, in 2015, many processes are at a cross-roads and Sweden will work towards finding a path forward that gives due consideration to forests.

In light of this, Sweden believes that it is too premature, at this stage, to state a preference for options for future IAF. Sweden looks forward to the results of the independent review currently being carried out by consultants, as well as the discussions during the upcoming meetings of the ad hoc Expert Group on IAF (AHEG). However, Sweden believes that it is important that the consultants and the AHEG look at the full range of options for the IAF and position it in the broader context of the post 2015 development agenda.

In addition, Sweden believes it to be important that when analyzing the various future options one does this in the context of principal functions such as providing forest policy dialogue; fostering synergies among different forest processes and organizations; and strengthening implementation on the ground.

The some of the possible future options that Sweden will analyze in the months to come include, amongst others:

- continuing the current IAF with the possibility of strengthening and amending its mandate based on the assessment of its effectiveness;
- developing the IAF in a new direction allowing for broader mandate to address larger land-use issues, in order to address the underlying causes of deforestation, many which lie outside the forest sector (i.e. Landscape Forum);
- strengthening already existing forest-related legal instruments (i.e. UNFCCC, CBD and ITTA) or possibly initiating the development of a legally binding instrument on forests at the global level;
- transferring the global forest dialogue to already existing organizations and processes (i.e. High Level Forum on Sustainable Development, FAO and UNEP); and
- developing and strengthening forest processes at the regional and sub-regional level and the possibility of connecting these to a global framework, either legally or non-legally binding.

Section B: Performance of the UN Forum on Forests and its process since 2000

Key achievements

Universal and holistic approach to SFM

UNFF was established in 2000, after long negotiations, and it is a unique UN body, in that it has universal membership, but is organized under the ECOSOC. UNFF's universal membership is a testimony of the universal relevance of forest issues. No other forest-related organization, or process, has this unique membership, which is combined with a holistic mandate that covers all three pillars of sustainable forest management. Sweden also believes that CPF contributes to the uniqueness of the UNFF, see more under section E.

Keeping the forest agenda alive

UNFF has been able to raise awareness among governments and within the UN system on the importance of forests to people around the world and how forests contribute to sustainable development and the MDGs. UNFF has adopted several resolutions to this effect over the years, most notably on the NLBI and GOF:s. Looking back some 15 to 20 years, it is evident that governments, through a continued dialogue, have been able to overcome great resistance in order to address governance issues, such as land tenure and illegal logging. Both these issues were, in the beginning, so contentious and difficult that no one dared to address them. Today, governments speak freely about these issues and acknowledge their problems of tackling both illegal logging and weak land tenure rights. Other issues that were difficult for the international forest community to initially employ were concepts developed in the environment and nature conservation fields, such as ecosystem services and landscape approach, which are now widely accepted. UNFF has contributed to these developments by offering a platform for discussions and dialogue between governments, intergovernmental organizations and stakeholders.

The International Year of Forests, which was later followed by the establishment of the International Day of Forests, are also examples of how UNFF has been able to raise the profile of forests globally and kept it on the UN agenda for the last 13 years. In Sweden we celebrated the International Year of Forests by highlighting the very important and multifunctional role that forests play in the society. This was done by celebrating the International Year of Forests at seminars, workshops and other forest related activities all over the country. A tree planting campaign was also launched in conjunction with organisation of Forest Days at 15 different locations spread over the country. A website for the International Year of Forests was also developed where a large number of forest activities during the year were widely spread.

Building trust and breaking the North-South divide

Sweden further regards the establishment of the Facilitative Process as one of the major achievements of UNFF. Forest financing has been one of the most difficult issues to address and has divided the world into North and South. The Facilitative Process has provided a platform for more focused discussion and to give voice to groups of countries representing Low Forest Cover Countries, Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries. This has clearly helped in providing a better understanding of the special needs of certain groups of countries. Sweden sees great potential in building on the Facilitative Process and other regional and sub-regional initiatives that aim at strengthening the efforts towards sustainable forest management in those countries that are of most need of support.

Moreover, Country Led Initiatives (CLI) have been a positive element in keeping the momentum during the intersessional periods. It has helped in building trust between countries and in dismantling some of the barriers between the common blocks of countries that prevail during official UNFF negotiations.

Sweden, through the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, with the support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, has been working on an initiative for several years on the *Lessons Learned on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa*³. Two workshops in 2004 were organized as a Swedish CLI in support of the UNFF. The CLI was also jointly organized with FAO and the African Forestry Research Network. The initiative resulted in the establishment of the African Forests Forum, which is a platform for forest policy discussions in Africa. The African Forests Forum often organizes meetings prior to UNFF sessions, in order to ensure that African forest experts come prepared to the UNFF sessions. The Swedish initiative has also, amongst others, supported assistance to African delegations and African Union to participate in the UNFF sessions.

Major weaknesses

Lack of implementation

While the UNFF has resulted in a number of resolutions and engaged Ministers in High-Level Segments, Sweden believes that this activity creates an illusion of real progress. Film competitions and numerous side events conducted in parallel compete for attention and mask the fact that not much is happening on the ground. Implementation of UNFF resolutions and the previous proposals for action from IPF and

³ The project stretched from 2003-2008 and had two phases. For more information on the project see the following website: <http://www.ksla.se/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/KSLAT-2-2011-Swedish-African-forest-relations.pdf>

IFF are not prioritized by governments and there is a lack of follow up. Reporting to UNFF is low and not much room is given during the sessions to address obstacles to implementation. Moreover, it is difficult to track progress and proper impact assessments are lacking.

Negotiation by exhaustion

UNFF sessions are characterized by long negotiations, stretching over days and nights. The informal nature and trust building exercise often applied during CLI are often long gone, as countries return to classical grouping during tough negotiations. A common tactic seems to be negotiation by exhaustion, which unfortunately is a common practice in many other multilateral organizations and instruments, including UNFF. The real deals, in the final hours of negotiations, are done by a small set of people in closed rooms.

There is a tendency that many countries are represented by their UN diplomats rather than by forest policy experts from their capital. This often leads to a difficulty to advance on real substance, or technical issues. Instead, much attention is given to more cross-cutting UN issues. Sweden would welcome exploring more innovative working methods during UNFF sessions, in order to stimulate far more fruitful dialogue on real content and cooperation across regional and political groups in order to break block dynamics.

The traditional grouping and polarization between various political groupings may also be a contributing factor to why UNFF has failed to progressively address new emerging issues and helped to shape the forest agenda in a successful and effective manner. The combination of both in effective meetings and inability to address “hot” issues has led to that UNFF is no longer the front-runner, the main forum for forest policy dialogue. Instead the forest dialogue, over the last few years, has been conducted in other fora, such as in the context of climate (REDD+), or the various processes set up as a follow up to Rio+20 and the post 2015 development agenda.

Stakeholders are left behind

A great disappointment from a Swedish perspective is the inability of UNFF to engage stakeholders, or what is commonly called major groups (9 major groups were identified at UNCED in 1992). Sweden has always encouraged stakeholders to be included in its delegation, or has facilitated the participation of Swedish stakeholders to contribute to the inputs to the sessions from major groups. Sweden is also concerned about the representativeness of some major groups when not a sufficient number of stakeholders are participating at UNFF sessions.

However, Sweden takes great pride in participating in the multi-stakeholder dialogue during UNFF sessions. Sweden regularly makes statements to show support to efforts made by major groups and to

highlight the importance of engaging stakeholders in global forest policy making. Sweden is of the opinion that major groups should be allowed to speak, not only during the multi-stakeholder dialogue, but also throughout the session by making suggestions to draft negotiating text along some existing practices that are commonly used in other processes, such as the Forest Europe process.

Section C: The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument) and the Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs)

The Forest Instrument represents a broad consensus on sustainable forest management. The Forest Instrument is well reflected in the Swedish model of sustainable forests management. However, the Forest Instrument has had limited impact on the Swedish forest sector, since the majority of actions in the Forests Instrument are already part of national legislation and normal practices. The Forest Instrument has, to some extent, contributed, along with other global forest-related processes, to raise the need for the Government to address the interconnectivity of national and global action on sustainable forest management. As discussed earlier, this is one of the main focuses of the *Forest Kingdom: with values for the world*.

As regards to the GOFs, and in particular the fourth one dealing with reversing the decline in ODA for sustainable forest management, Sweden would like to promote forestry issues in a more combined way, interlinked in the sustainable agendas of climate and environment as well as energy and private sector. The aim is to focus on the importance of forest issues in developing context and try to find a good entry point into a broader sustainable agenda.

Section D: The Forum's Secretariat

The ECOSOC resolution that established UNFF called for a compact Secretariat to service the IAF. As a result, a small Secretariat was established in DESA as an independent unit under the USG, building on the previous IPF/IFF Secretariat that had been part of the Division on Sustainable Development.

Initially, the Secretariat enjoyed great support from CPF members through secondments of Senior staff (ITTO, UNEP and FAO). However, with time Sweden notes with disappointment that CPF members have been sending less secondments and that the level of those staff members has decreased. Sweden believes that the secondment of CPF members is an important means of ensuring the policy coordination, which is one of the principle functions of the IAF. Moreover, CPF members, with their different comparative advantage, can significantly strengthen the Forum Secretariat on key technical

issues, since the core UNFF Secretariat are often more generalists or former UN diplomats.

Several countries have also seconded staff to the Secretariat, or contributed to the UNFF trust fund, that has enabled additional staff to be hired. Sweden wishes to thank those countries that have generously supported the UNFF trust fund over the years. Sweden has only contributed with limited resources to the UNFF trust fund and mainly in support of the Facilitative Process. However, Sweden seconded an Associate Expert (AE)/Junior Professional Officer (JPO) during the years 2001-2002.

Despite the compact nature of the Secretariat, Sweden notes with satisfaction that documentation to sessions of UNFF has always been submitted on time. The documents provide a good basis for discussions and often include the basic elements for resolutions that are later adopted by the Forum. According to Sweden, the UNFF Secretariat also services the sessions of the Forum to satisfaction.

Section E: Collaborative Partnership on Forests and its Member Organizations

Sweden regards enhanced cooperation, as well as policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues among relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, as one of the most important principle functions of the IAF. The establishment of the CPF is seen as very positive by Sweden. In building on the comparative advantages among the different organizations, the CPF is seen as an effective way of both supporting the policy developments by the Forum and assisting countries in implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action and the various UNFF resolutions. Sweden would welcome that CPF not only supports forest policy and sustainable forest management in the framework of UNFF but rather more broadly in other forest-related processes.

Sweden believes that CPF has significantly contributed to supporting the policy development of the Forum. CPF and its members always play an active role during the sessions, with valuable statements and enriching dialogue. Moreover, we are impressed of the strong and coordinated efforts that CPF also has made in other processes as well, such as a joint side event during the Rio+20 conference and the Forest Day during climate change negotiations. CPF has also contributed greatly in advancing certain areas, such as harmonizing, monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests, and the harmonization of terminology, as well as forest finance. Sweden would also like to specifically highlight the valuable leadership and commitment that FAO has shown over the years to the CPF.

However, Sweden sees the limitations of CPF as not being able to deliver a coordinated response at the operational level (at least among those members of CPF that work in the field). Sweden is wondering why this would be the case and hopes that this will be one of the areas that the consultants and the AHEG will explore further. Sweden also sees some conflict of interest of UNFF Secretariat - on the one hand, servicing both the UNFF and CPF, and on the other hand, participating as a member of CPF. The difficulty of the duality in its role has been confusing at times.

Overall Sweden is supportive to mechanisms, such as the CPF, that enhance cooperation and stimulate better policy and programme coordination on forest-related issues, as well as foster greater synergies among relevant forests organizations and instruments.

Section F: Financing options and strategies

Sweden believes that sustainable forest management should be self-sustained and self-financed. Half of the productive forest land in Sweden is owned by private individuals. Of these, approximately 38 per cent are women and 62 per cent are men. Private forest companies own about one quarter of the productive forests land. The Swedish state and other public owners own approximately one fifth of the productive forest land. With this ownership structure each forest owner takes long-term responsibility for the sustainable management of its forests. No specific government subsidies or other incentives or other financing mechanisms are used.

However, Sweden recognizes that, for some countries, in particular developing countries, additional financing may be required in the transition from unsustainable forest practices to sustainable forest management. Sweden shares the view with the rest of the EU that financing for sustainable forest management should continue to come from a wide range of complementary sources: public and private, domestic and foreign, bilateral and multilateral. If all these resources are pulled together, then sustainable forests management should be possible throughout the world. Hence, Sweden does not favour creating a voluntary Global Forests Fund.

Moreover, Sweden wishes to stress that one of the important prerequisites for sustainable forests management is the importance of establishing an adequate enabling environment (including good governance, efficient law enforcement, and secure tenure and user rights) at the national level. This will greatly increase the potential for

mobilizing new and additional financing, in particular from the private sector.

List of abbreviations

AE	Associate Expert
AHEG	Ad hoc Expert Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CLI	Country Led Initiatives
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs at UN Headquarters
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GOFs	Global Objectives on Forests
IAF	International Arrangement on Forests
IFF	Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
IPF	Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NLBI	Non Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (also called Forests Instrument)
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation. "+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

USG

Under Secretary General