

**CPF-NGO/IPO Meeting**  
**New York, 13 June 2001 (during UNFF 1)**

**Summary Report**

The meeting was co-chaired by M. Hosny El-Lakany, ADG, FAO Forestry Department and Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and Miguel Lovera, Coordinator, Global Forest Coalition and Southern NGOs' focal point to the CPF. All CPF member representatives, about 20 representatives of NGOs/IPOs, and several government delegates attended the meeting.

The agenda, which was jointly proposed by NGOs and CPF members, covered the following items: CPF membership, mandate and policy; the CPF Network and cooperation between the CPF and Major Groups; implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action (including national forest programmes and the work of PROFOR and the NFP Facility); and participatory monitoring and reporting in the UNFF. Two items were added on the agenda: relation to PROFOR, and coordination with the *ad hoc* technical expert group on forest biodiversity of the CBD. NGO/IPO representatives distributed a discussion paper on Collaborative Partnership on Forests (see Annex 1).

NGO/IPO representatives stressed the need for effective mechanisms to enhance cooperation and collaboration between CPF members, not only at the international level but also at the local and national levels (e.g., through support to national forest programmes). One NGO representative suggested that as a first step to promoting participation, the CPF member organizations should improve implementation of their own policies on participation and information disclosure for their projects and programmes operating at the national level. The links between PROFOR and NFP Facility were discussed, as well as their contribution to the work of the CPF. The CPF Chair indicated that the mechanisms to strengthen members' collaboration and coordination would be further defined and developed in the course of the CPF's work.

NGO/IPO representatives requested that the Permanent UN Forum on Indigenous Issues be invited to join the CPF and clarification on how the Forum relates to the UNFF. The CPF Chair noted that the CPF membership is based on the recommendations of the ECOSOC resolution (builds upon the ITFF) as well as those made by governments at the Organizational meeting of the UNFF in February 2001, but that the CPF Network<sup>1</sup> would include other interested organizations, in- and outside the UN system, and including NGOs, IPOs and other major groups. In response to some queries from NGO representatives about GEF membership in the CPF, an explanation was given of why GEF was well positioned to substantively contribute to the work of the CPF.

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<sup>1</sup> See further CPF Policy Document, May 2001

NGO representatives requested clarification of the relationship between the multi-stakeholder dialogue and the CPF Network. They expressed the opinion that the multi-stakeholder dialogue should not be the sole mechanism for civil society's input into the UNFF process.

The CPF was asked about the mechanisms by which members of the CPF Network could channel their input into the CPF. The CPF Chair indicated that the CPF was in the process of elaborating further the role, functions and working modalities of the CPF Network, and that a paper on this would be made available to the NGO focal points and others for comment. He further invited NGOs and other interest groups to elaborate on their views on the *modus operandi* of the CPF Network and their potential contribution to implementation. An NGO representative suggested that a CPF website could provide, e.g., information on CPF activities and provide a mechanism for NGOs/IPOs to provide comments and input.

NGO representatives called for an open assessment, monitoring and reporting in the UNFF by involving a wide range of stakeholders. They also proposed that intersessional activities, including that of expert groups, involve Major Groups. They pointed the inclusion of NGO and IPO representatives in the current work of the CBD's *ad hoc* technical expert group on forest biodiversity as an example.

It was agreed that the next CPF-NGO meeting would be expanded into a CPF Network meeting.

## **NGO/IPO Discussion Paper on the Mission, Function and Structure of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests**

World Rainforest Movement, Friends of the Earth International, International Alliance of Tribal-Indigenous Peoples of the Tropical Forests, Yvy Pora - Produccion Sustentable (Paraguay), Friends of the Siberian Forests (Russia), Centre for Environment and Development (Cameroon), Sobrevivencia (Paraguay), Crescente Fertil (Brazil), Bureau for Regional Outreach Campaigns (Russia), Institute for Cultural Affairs (Ghana), IRI (New Zealand), FERN (EU)

### **The Involvement of NGOs/IPOs in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)**

1. NGOs, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPOs) and other major groups play a crucial role in the implementation of existing forest-related commitments. They implement thousands of, often very successful, projects, facilitate necessary bottom-up approaches and have an important watchdog function in terms of monitoring the implementation of international agreements. The participation of Indigenous Peoples, the major group that is affected most by deforestation and forest degradation, in international forest policy is fundamental to the legitimacy of forest policy. Without effective participation of NGOs, IPOs and other major groups in its development and implementation, international forest policy becomes irrelevant and illegitimate.

2. The draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly stipulates that Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in all policy-making that is of direct relevance to them. As forests are the home to many of the world's Indigenous Peoples, they have the right to participate in forest policy-making. This right was reiterated by the Conference of the Parties of the Biodiversity Convention (Decision V/16).

3. Except for being allowed access to web-based information and a short briefing once or twice a year, NGOs, IPOs and other major groups were virtually excluded from the Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF). The Chair of the former ITFF has committed himself to facilitating more effective NGO/IPO participation in the successor to ITFF, but this participation has yet to be realized. The opportunity to meet with CPF is appreciated, but the CPF did not send out a draft of its policy document to NGOs/IPOs to allow input into the final draft, as was promised in February 2001. Likewise, no major groups' input was sought on the draft Concept Paper of the Preliminary Conceptual Approach to Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting in the UNFF, despite the fact that independent reports form an essential tool for effective monitoring, assessment and reporting.

4. Innovative mechanisms and procedures to ensure the effective participation of NGOs, IPOs and other major groups in all aspects of the work of the CPF should be established. The idea of a CPF Network provides only a first step to real involvement. The qualification that Network participants "may be" invited to contribute to CPF activities is highly unsatisfactory. For more genuine participation, the following practices and procedures are proposed:

- effective involvement of national NGOs, IPOs and other major groups in the activities of CPF-members at the national level. The Network can be used to ensure the broad range of major groups within a country is informed of and enabled to participate in CPF activities;
- effective involvement of NGOs, IPOs and other major groups in the activities of CPF at the international level, including the development of the UNFF Plan of Action; the development of the monitoring, assessment and reporting system on progress in implementation and the monitoring, assessment and reporting itself; the elaboration of reports and other background material for the UNFF; and other CPF activities, such as the implementation facility;

Such involvement would comprise of both informal partnerships and formal procedures. The latter would include:

- full transparency;
- participation of NGO and IPO focal points in CPF meetings;
- drafts of relevant policy documents and reports to be sent to focal points who can disseminate them within their constituencies to allow for input (within a reasonable time frame);
- continuation of regular meetings between the CPF and a broader group of major group representatives.

Sufficient resources should be provided to ensure effective participation of a diverse and balanced representation of civil society in all CPF activities;

### **Membership of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests**

5. The mandate of the newly established UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is to integrate indigenous perspectives in the work of all relevant UN bodies. The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum, which is expected to be set up before the end of 2001, should be invited to participate as a full member in the CPF.

6. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is not an autonomous body as far as forest policy is concerned. It is the financial mechanism of two, and possibly three, legally binding instruments in the field of forests, the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the Convention on Desertification (CCD). As the Secretariats of CBD, FCCC and CCD are already member of CPF or have been invited to become member, and as all GEF implementing agencies are CPF-member, the separate membership of GEF itself is redundant. The participation of GEF in the CPF is formally dependent upon the consent of the Conferences of the Parties of these instruments. Moreover, GEF would not be allowed to follow any policy guidance from UNFF, unless explicitly mandated to do so by the respective Conferences of the Parties.

### **Mission and Functions of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests**

7. Considering the history of a number of CPF members of being involved in destructive practices that are in contrary to existing forest-related commitments, mainstreaming forest conservation into the policies and programs of these agencies is a first requirement for the credibility of the CPF.

8. The mission of the CPF as outlined in the Policy Document is not in line with the mandate of the CPF outlined by ECOSOC, which included supporting the work of the UN Forum on Forests *and* enhancing cooperation and coordination among CPF participants. The mission statement only focuses on support to the UNFF. Considering the need for effective interagency coordination and cooperation in the field of forest policy at the national and local level, this should form a central part of the mission and functions of CPF.

9. In the light of the above, it is of crucial importance that ALL members of the CPF are involved in all country-level activities to implement existing forest-related commitments. The proposed National Forest Programme Facility, in which only the FAO and PROFOR participate, is in contradiction with the trust and mandate of the CPF. The CPF does not make sense if a few of its members can run ahead and implement the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action without any effective involvement of the other members of CPF. Contributions to this Facility should be used to ensure effective participation of those CPF members that might not have the resources to participate in this Facility otherwise and genuine major group participation. The modality of participation in the Facility at the national level might depend on the members: in the case of the Convention Secretariats it would be most effective to ensure active participation of national focal points to these Conventions. This would also ensure a country-driven approach to its activities.