

## **CPF STATEMENT AT THE OPENING SESSION OF UNFF 4**

Presented by  
M. Hosny El-Lakany  
Assistant Director-General, FAO, Forestry Department  
Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates and colleagues: Once again I am honoured to make this statement on behalf of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

Mr. Chairperson, all CPF members reaffirm their strong commitment to support the UNFF process and to assist member countries in their endeavours to implement sustainable forest management. By the same token, I would like to thank countries once again for their foresight in calling for the establishment of this informal but effective arrangement. Members are ready to continue to enhance collaboration and coordination on forest issues, especially with a view to supporting implementation by countries.

Mr. Chairperson, although I am confident that the UNFF delegates know us well, let me just recall that CPF is an interagency arrangement among 14 forest-related international organizations, institutions and secretariats. CPF is an effective partnership because 1) we are a relatively small group; 2) we operate as an informal arrangement; and 3) we share the same aspiration for better management and conservation of the world's forests and the improved livelihoods of people living in and around forests.

Mr Chairperson, the past year has been important for the international forest community, with forest discussions at the UNFF, the World Forestry Congress, the FAO Committee on Forestry, the Conferences of the Parties of the conventions on biological diversity (CBD), desertification (UNCCD) and climate change (UNFCCC), the preparatory committees for the renegotiation of the ITTA, and the IUCN World Parks Conference, just to mention a few major events. Many of these meetings highlighted global commitments to sustainable management of the world's forests, as did the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, which also accorded high importance to the CPF. The role and work of CPF is also being increasingly recognized in these fora.

Mr. Chairperson, I am pleased to inform you that several governing bodies of CPF members reaffirmed their support to UNFF and CPF during the past year. We are particularly proud of our initiatives and accomplishments in 2003. The year marked significant and increasing collaborative activities, including joint projects and co-sponsoring of meetings and workshops, especially on national forest programmes, decentralization, criteria and indicators, wildfires, mangroves, forest restoration, protected areas and specific issues of low forest cover countries. This cooperation provides the needed link from international recommendations to the activities of CPF members, and it enhances action on the ground.

I would like to mention just two specific joint initiatives that have shown significant progress. First, the CPF members are helping streamline forest-related reporting. Based on an Internet portal that provides easy access to national reports, members now foresee a joint project to develop a "forest reporting information service". Such a service would make best use of synergies with existing information services of the CPF members. It would make it easier to compile future reports and to reduce overlap in questionnaires, thus reducing the reporting burden on countries. Second, the CPF Sourcebook on Funding for Sustainable Forest Management is now widely used. It has been updated and translated, and it now includes a discussion forum and advisory service for questions about funding. Through these initiatives and others, CPF members also contributed to the work of the two *ad hoc* expert groups of UNFF that met in December last year.

We look forward to hearing your views on our current and future activities tomorrow, when we present our progress report, the CPF Framework 2004. While we indeed look forward to receiving UNFF's guidance and are trying to accommodate as many requests as possible, we hope that delegates will bear in mind that CPF *per se* does not have a budget and that each individual member is responsible to its own governing body.

Mr. Chairman, the CPF members look forward to contributing intellectually, technically and substantively to the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement at UNFF5. We will also be pleased to contribute to the third *ad hoc* expert group, which will meet in September this year.

CPF members trust that the political direction that countries take regarding future institutional arrangements will help to mobilize action towards sustainable forest management. We stand ready to assist and to support this process and we are as committed as ever to working together with governments to achieve this goal worldwide.

Mr. Chairman, we wish you every success with the session and look forward to stimulating discussions and fruitful outcomes. Thank you.