



WORLD OF FORESTRY

Countries adopt non-legally binding instrument

Delegates to the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-7) successfully negotiated a non-legally binding instrument for sustainable forest management and UNFF's Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2007 to 2015. Nearly 600 participants attended the session, which was held at UN headquarters in New York from 16 to 27 April 2007. Consensus was reached on previously controversial issues such as inclusion of good governance as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable forest management. However, discussion on how to finance sustainable forest management was deferred to UNFF-8.

During the meeting, delegates also participated in multistakeholder dialogues with major groups (e.g. youth, women, small forest owners, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, scientific communities and labour). A panel discussion was held with member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), addressing ways to enhance cooperation. UNFF also launched preparations for the 2011 International Year of Forests.

Negotiations for the new instrument centred on a draft text put forward by an ad hoc expert group which met in December 2006. The instrument will be submitted through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for adoption by the UN General Assembly later in 2007. For all practical purposes it can be concluded operational.

The purposes of the instrument are to enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); to provide a framework for national action and international cooperation; and to strengthen political commitment and action for effective implementation of sustainable forest management for all types of forests and for achieving four shared

Global Objectives on Forests agreed by UNFF in 2006. These are summarized as:

- to reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;
- to enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people;
- to increase significantly the area of protected and sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests;
- to reverse the decline in official development assistance (ODA) for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased additional financial resources.

In the preamble, Member States reaffirm their commitment to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Declaration on Environment and Development, the Forest Principles, the MDGs, and the four Global Objectives on Forests, including to make progress towards their achievement by 2015.

The text recognizes that each State is responsible for the sustainable management of its forests and for the enforcement of its forest-related laws and calls for the transparent involvement of local communities, forest owners and other relevant stakeholders in forest decision-making processes that affect them.

The text also states that countries should monitor and assess progress towards achieving the purpose of the instrument. UNFF will address the implementation of the instrument within the context of its Multi-Year Programme of Work. Countries should submit voluntary progress reports, as resources allow, as part of their regular reporting to UNFF.

Summary from the non-legally binding instrument: Actions that Member States should undertake through national policies and measures

- Develop and implement national forest programmes and integrate them in poverty reduction strategies
- Use the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management
- Promote efficient production and processing of forest products
- Support traditional forest-related knowledge and fair and equitable sharing of benefits
- Develop financial strategies and create enabling environments for investment in sustainable forest management
- Encourage valuation of forest goods and services and reflection of values in markets
- Strengthen forest legislation and forest law enforcement and promote good governance
- Address threats to forest health and vitality
- Create and maintain networks of protected forest areas and assess their effectiveness
- Strengthen the contribution of science and research to forest policies and programmes
- Strengthen access to education, training and extension
- Strengthen public awareness of the importance of forests
- Enhance cooperation, partnerships and cross-sectoral integration of forest strategies
- Enhance access to forest resources and markets to support livelihoods and income diversification from forest management



Multi-Year Programme of Work

The session concluded that hereafter UNFF will meet every two years instead of annually. The next three sessions will be focused on achieving the four global objectives and implementing the non-legally binding instrument. Upcoming sessions will consider the following themes:

- UNFF-8: Forests in a changing environment and means of implementation for sustainable forest management;
- UNFF-9: Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication;
- UNFF-10: Forests and economic development;
- UNFF-11: Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the international arrangement on forests.

Within these themes, each session will also address means of implementation and forest law enforcement and governance. Future sessions will have regional and subregional inputs; multistakeholder dialogues and participation; and panels with CPF members. Emerging issues may also be included. The focus is expected to be more on exchange of experiences than on negotiating text.

High-level ministerial segments are planned for 2011 and 2015. UNFF may convene ad hoc expert group meetings, and welcomes country-, organization- and region-led initiatives focused on issues in the Programme of Work.

Regarding means of implementation of sustainable forest management, the non-legally binding instrument and the global objectives, the meeting recognized that a detailed approach to forest financing could not be agreed at UNFF-7. It was decided instead to consider a global financial mechanism, portfolio approach or forest financing framework at UNFF-8. The forum will propose to ECOSOC that an open-ended ad hoc expert group be convened to develop proposals in this regard.

All in all, UNFF-7 succeeded in fulfilling its objectives and has ensured the forum's future until at least 2015. The success in negotiating the instrument – and perhaps even more, the agreement on the Multi-Year Programme of Work – reaffirms the importance of keeping forests and sustainable forest management on the UN agenda, urges priority to forest issues on the national development agendas and emphasizes national forest programmes.

UNFF-8 will be held from 20 April to 1 May 2009.

The report of the meeting and the text of the non-legally binding instrument are available on the UNFF Web site: www.un.org/esa/forests

New ITTO Executive Director elected

Emmanuel Ze Meka of Cameroon has been elected Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). The election was the most important agenda item at the forty-second session of the International Tropical Timber Council, the governing body of ITTO, held from 7 to 12 May 2007 in Port

Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Ze Meka identified his four priorities as greater social responsibility, including equity in benefit sharing and good governance; poverty alleviation and global partnership for development; increased industrial competitiveness through value addition, technological advances, capacity building, and overcoming tariffs and non-tariff barriers; and reducing deforestation and increasing forest cover to combat climate change.

ITTO, headquartered in Yokohama, Japan, provides a framework for member countries to discuss and develop policies on issues relating to international trade in and use of tropical timber and the sustainable management of its resource base. The ITTO also administers assistance for related projects. ITTO has 60 members which are divided into two caucuses: producer countries (33 members, including the European Community) and consumer countries (27 members). ITTO's membership represents 90 percent of world trade in tropical timber and 80 percent of the world's tropical forests.

Six candidates were in the running for Executive Director, from Cameroon, Germany, Indonesia, the Philippines, Switzerland and the United States. Although some present pointed out that the leader of ITTO should not be classified as a "producer" or "consumer", the election nevertheless divided consumer and producer groups. An impasse between the two caucuses was finally resolved by the gracious withdrawal of the other leading contender, the German candidate Jürgen Blaser. This made way for the election of Ze Meka by consensus.

Other issues on the agenda concerned operational, project and policy work, including:

- the annual review and assessment of the international tropical timber situation;
- new listing proposals under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), and the relationship between ITTO and CITES;
- forest law enforcement and governance in the context of sustainable timber production and trade;
- the ITTO Objective 2000;
- ITTO guidelines for the restoration, management and rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests;
- civil society and private-sector partnerships for sustainable forest management;
- forest-related developments in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

UNEP Champions of the Earth include defender of Brazilian forests

Seven Champions of the Earth were honoured by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) during an awards ceremony in Singapore on 19 April 2007. The award, established in 2004, recognizes prominent and inspirational environmental leaders from each region of the world.



Marina Silva of Brazil was recognized for her tireless fight to protect the Amazon tropical forest while taking into account the perspectives of people who use the resources in their daily lives. Silva has championed the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity concerning conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity. As a member of Brazil's senate, she has successfully legislated tropical forest conservation, defended people against poverty and protected their way of life. As the Brazilian Minister for Environment since 2003, she has helped stem deforestation by implementing a cross-sectoral approach to environmental issues.

Al Gore of the United States was honoured for making environmental protection a pillar of his public service and for educating the world on the dangers posed by rising greenhouse gas emissions. During his 16-year career in the United States Congress, he led efforts to clean up toxic dumps and held the first hearing on global climate change. As Vice-President, Gore expended great efforts to protect habitat across the United States and expand national parks and wildlife refuges. He also helped negotiate and draft the Kyoto Protocol. Since the conclusion of his public service he has continued to work on behalf of the environment, including through the critically acclaimed documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Cherif Rahmani, Minister for Environment of Algeria, President of the foundation Déserts du Monde and Honorary Spokesperson of the United Nations International Year of Deserts and Desertification, was honoured for advancing environmental law in his country and for his contributions in addressing desertification.

His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan received the award for his efforts on behalf of transboundary collaboration to protect the environment and his holistic approach to environmental issues. As founder of a number of Jordanian and international environmental institutions and as President of Jordan's Higher Council for Science and Technology, he has focused on enhancing the quality of life in dryland areas and on environmental management and protection, especially water quality management.

Elisea "Bebet" Gillera Gozun of the Philippines was honoured for her leadership of several projects to reduce pollution by industrial effluents and to monitor environmental performance of industries. By winning the trust of business leaders, non-governmental organizations and political decision-makers, she successfully pushed for the introduction of community-based waste recovery, recycling and reuse in the Philippines.

Finally, Viveka Bohn of Sweden, head of the Swedish project secretariat for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and co-chair of the Marrakech process, was recognized for her role in multilateral negotiations and her leadership in global efforts to ensure chemical safety.

In addition, a special prize was awarded to Jacques Rogge and the International Olympic Committee for providing greater

resources to sustainable development and for introducing stringent environmental requirements for cities bidding to host Olympic Games.

UNEP invites nominations of individuals who have made a significant and recognized contribution globally, regionally and beyond, to the protection and sustainable management of the Earth's environment and natural resources. No monetary reward is attached to the prize.

International Day for Biological Diversity

"Biodiversity and Climate Change" was the theme of the 2007 International Day for Biological Diversity, celebrated 22 May with leadership by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The theme raised awareness not only that biodiversity loss will accelerate as a result of climate change, but also that biodiversity can help defend against the impacts of climate change. The interrelationship of biodiversity and climate change was echoed in comments by the heads of CBD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), who noted that the stemming of biodiversity loss needs to be part of climate change adaptation strategies, and that the CBD should continue to contribute actively to further work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

To mark the day, the CBD Secretariat, in partnership with the City of Montreal, sponsored a High-Level Event at the Montreal Botanical Garden. The day-long conference looked at evolution in biodiversity and climate change issues since the signing of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 15 years ago.

Also in Montreal, CBD co-sponsored a Public Conference on Climate Change and Biodiversity, attended by more than 1 000 people. It featured Jean Lemire, a biologist, filmmaker and expedition leader, whose pictures and video footage exhibited the magnitude of climate change in the Antarctic region and its serious impact on Antarctic wildlife.

Celebrations were organized or promotions carried out by 38 countries, the European Community and a number of partner organizations.