



UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

140 EAST 45 STREET  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017-3505

June 22, 2006

Dear Mr. Patosaari:

As per the request made at the Sixth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-6), enclosed is the U.S. submission to UNFF on a non-legally binding instrument on forests for inclusion in the compilation of draft indicative elements and other proposals by member states that the UNFF Secretariat is preparing.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Miller  
Ambassador

Mr. Pekka Patosaari  
Director  
Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
DC1-1245, One UN Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Miniam/Elvera:

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26/6/2006

*US Submission on a Non-Legally Binding Instrument on Forests*

June 2006

**INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING  
ON SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT  
(CODEX SYLVANUS)**

The Subscribing States/Member States of the United Nations General Assembly,

*Recalling* ECOSOC resolution [2006/# of day and month] on the Outcome of the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000 on the Report of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, which, *inter alia*, decided the main objective and functions of the international arrangement on forests, established the UNFF, and invited the executive heads of relevant organizations, institutions and instruments to form a CPF to support the work of the Forum and to enhance cooperation and coordination among participants; *from PP1 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Also recalling* the Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (the "Forest Principles"); Chapter 11 of Agenda 21; proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests; resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests; the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development; and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and relevant international legally binding instruments; *from PP4 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Recognizing* the importance of the multiple economic, social and environmental benefits derived from goods and services provided by forests and trees outside forests; *from PP6 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Emphasizing* that sustainable forest management can contribute significantly to sustainable development, poverty eradication and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; *from PP7 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Expressing* concern about continued deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the slow rate of afforestation and forest cover recovery and reforestation, and the resulting adverse impact on economies, the environment, including biological diversity, and the livelihoods of at least a billion people and their cultural heritage, and emphasizing the need for more effective implementation of sustainable forest

management at all levels to address these critical challenges; *from PP8 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Recognizing* the importance of domestic law enforcement and governance to sustainable forest management, and the contribution in this regard of regional forest law enforcement and governance ministerial processes and related trade initiatives;

*Also recognizing* the important contribution of voluntary public-private partnerships and private sector initiatives at all levels to achieving effective implementation of sustainable forest management and support national strategies, plans and priorities related to forests, and noting in this regard, *inter alia*, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership and Asia Forest Partnership; *from P11 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Also stressing* the need to strengthen political commitment and collective efforts at all levels, to include forests on national and international development agendas, to enhance national policy coordination and international cooperation and to promote intersectoral coordination at all levels for the effective implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests; *from PP12 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Welcoming* the accomplishments of the international arrangement on forests since its inception, including the joint initiatives of the CPF; *from PP13 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

*Emphasizing* that effective implementation of sustainable forest management is critically dependent upon adequate resources, including financing, capacity development and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and *recognizing* in particular the need to mobilize increased financial resources, including from innovative sources, for developing countries, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition; *from PP10 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

## **ADOPTION**

2. Adopt this International Understanding on Sustainable Forest Management (*Codex Sylvanus*), hereinafter referred to as "this Understanding", in order to promote the sustainable management of our forests;

## **PRINCIPLES**

2. Recognize and resolve to respect the following principles:

(a) This Understanding is non-legally binding and participation in this Understanding is voluntary and open to all States;

(b) States have sovereignty over their forests resources, as set forth in principle 1(a) of the Forest Principles;

(c) Each country is responsible for the sustainable management of its forests and for the enforcement of its forest laws, which is essential to achieving sustainable forest management;

(d) International cooperation plays a crucial catalytic role in reinforcing the efforts of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to improve the management of their forests;

(e) Nothing in this Understanding is intended to affect international legal obligations;

(f) Recognition that the private sector, forest owners, local and indigenous communities and other stakeholders can contribute to achieving sustainable forest management and, as such, should be involved in a transparent and participatory way in public forest decision-making that affects them;

(g) Recognition that the following 7 thematic elements of sustainable forest management drawn from the criteria identified by existing criteria and indicators processes offer a coherent and useful reference framework for sustainable forest management and constitute an indicative global set of criteria for sustainable forest management:

- (i) Extent of forest resources,
- (ii) Biological diversity,
- (iii) Forest health and vitality,
- (iv) Protective functions of forests,
- (v) Productive functions of forests,
- (vi) Socio-economic benefits of forests, and
- (vii) Legal, policy and institutional framework;

### ***GLOBAL OBJECTIVES ON FORESTS***

3. Reaffirm the following shared global objectives on forests set by ECOSOC in its resolution 2006/42 and agree to work globally and nationally to achieve progress towards their achievement by 2015; *from Para 3 Chapeau of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

#### Global objective 1

Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation; *from Para 3 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

#### Global objective 2

Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest dependent people; *from Para 3 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

#### Global objective 3

Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests; *from Para 3 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

#### Global objective 4

Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management; *from Para 3 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

### ***NATIONAL POLICIES AND MEASURES***

4. Resolve, while taking national sovereignty, practices and conditions into account, to make all efforts to contribute to the above shared global objectives through the development or indication of voluntary national measures, policies, actions or specific goals as follows: *from Paras 4 & 6 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(a) Develop and implement national forest programs, policies and strategies, as appropriate, and integrate national forest programs or other forest strategies into national strategies for sustainable development, relevant national action plans and, where appropriate, poverty reduction strategies; *from Para 6 Chapeau and Para 6(c) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(b) Create an effective enabling environment for foreign and domestic investments in sustainable forest management, including investments to avoid the loss of forest cover and forest degradation and support reforestation, afforestation and forest restoration, as well as where appropriate an enabling environment for the involvement of and investment by local communities and other forest users in sustainable forest management; *from Para 5(i) and 5(j) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(c) Develop and implement forest conservation and rehabilitation strategies, as well as strategies to increase the area under sustainable forest management and reduce forest degradation and loss of forest cover *from Para 2(b) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(d) Monitor and assess forest conditions and progress toward sustainable forest management using agreed criteria and indicators for sustainable forest

management, and prepare, periodically update and widely disseminate national reports reflecting such assessments;

(e) Involve forest owners, local communities, the private sector, civil society organizations and other stakeholders in a transparent and participatory manner in forest decision-making that affects them;

(f) Initiate or strengthen public-private partnerships to promote implementation of national forest programs, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and good business practices;

(g) Encourage the development of mechanisms, including systems for attributing proper value, as appropriate, to the benefits derived from goods and services provided by forests and trees outside forests, consistent with relevant national legislation and policies; *from Para 5(l) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(h) Foster access, where appropriate, by households and communities to forest resources and markets; *from Para 5(m) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(i) Support livelihoods and income diversification from forest products and services for small-scale forest owners and indigenous peoples, including forest-dependent local communities and poor people living in and around forest areas, consistent with sustainable forest management objectives; *from Para 5(n) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(j) Support scientific and technological innovations for sustainable forest management, including innovations that help local communities undertake sustainable forest management; *from Para 6(a) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(k) Promote the active participation and empowerment of all forest-related stakeholders, especially, where relevant, local and forest-dependent communities, indigenous peoples, women and small-scale private forest owners and forest workers, in the development and implementation of sustainable forest management policies and programs; *from Para 6(e) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(l) Strengthen mechanisms that enhance sharing and use of best practices in sustainable forest management; *from Para 6(f) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(m) Encourage the private sector, including timber processors, exporters, and importers, as well as civil society organizations, to develop, promote and implement voluntary instruments with a view to adopting good business practices that support sustainable forest management and improve market transparency; *from Para 6(h) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(n) Identify and implement appropriate measures to enhance cooperation and cross-sectoral policy and program coordination among sectors affecting and affected by forest management; *from Para 7 Chapeau of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

### ***INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION***

5. Further resolve to contribute to the above shared global objectives by cooperating bilaterally, regionally and internationally, as appropriate, to:

(a) Promote international cooperation, including south-south and triangular cooperation; *from Para 6(d) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(b) Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management; *from Para 3 and 5(a) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(c) Mobilizing and providing significant new and additional resources for sustainable forest management from private, public, domestic and international sources to and within developing countries, especially least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, as well as through voluntary contributions to existing forest-related funds hosted by members of the CPF, including the National Forest Program Facility, the Program for Forestry and the Bali Partnership Fund; *from Para 5(b)-(d) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(d) Enhance the capacity of countries, in particular developing countries, to significantly increase the production of forest products from sustainably managed forests; *from Para 6(b) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(e) Strengthen forest education and research and development through global, regional and subregional networks, as well as through relevant organizations, institutions and centers of excellence in all regions of the world, particularly in developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition; *from Para 7(b) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(f) Strengthen the capacity of countries to address illegal practices according to national legislation and eliminate illegal international trade in forest products in the forest sector, through the promotion of forest law enforcement and governance at national, subnational, regional and subregional levels; *from Para 6(g) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

(g) Strengthen the capacity of countries to effectively combat wildlife poaching in forests and related trafficking in wildlife and wildlife parts through enhanced public awareness, consumer education, law enforcement and information networks;

- (h) Strengthen cooperation and partnerships at the regional level, as needed, to: (i) Increase political, financial and technical support and capacity; (ii) develop regional strategies and plans for implementation; (iii) collaborate on implementation activities; (iv) exchange experiences and lessons learned, and (v) enhance forest and related wildlife law enforcement and governance; *from Para 7(c) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*
- (i) Initiate or strengthen public-private partnerships to promote implementation of national forest programs, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and good business practices;
- (j) Identify and implement measures to improve regional and international coordination among sectors affecting and affected by forest management;
- (k) Facilitate international support, especially through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, for national actions to implement sustainable forest management and establish and maintain protected forest areas;
- (l) As States members of the governing bodies of the member organizations of the CPF member organizations, help ensure that the forest-related priorities and programs of members of the CPF are integrated and mutually supportive, consistent with their mandates (*from para 24 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*) and support CPF efforts to:
- (i) Strengthen collaboration and coordination on forest issues among CPF member organizations; *from Para 22(a) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*
  - (ii) Continue and further develop ongoing CPF initiatives on monitoring, assessment and reporting on forest resources, on streamlining national forest reporting, on the sourcebook on funding for sustainable forest management, on harmonizing forest-related definitions and on the Global Forest Information Service; *from Para 22(b) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*
  - (iii) Further harmonize processes for voluntary monitoring, assessment and reporting, taking into account the 7 thematic elements for sustainable forest management, with a view to reducing the reporting burden on countries; *from Para 20 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*
  - (iv) Translate relevant policy recommendations of the UN Forum on Forests into their programs of work; *from Para 22(c) of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

- (v) Establish a clearing house to facilitate access by developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, to better technology for sustainable forest management; *from Para 8 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*

#### ***REPORTING AND REVIEW***

6. Agree, on a voluntary basis, to submit national reports to the Forum, as well as members of the CPF and other relevant organizations, instruments and institutions, consistent with their programs of work, on progress in implementing national measures, policies, actions or specific objectives set out in paragraph 4 above, taking into consideration, as appropriate, the seven thematic elements of sustainable forest management; *from para 19 of draft resolution contained in E/2006/42*
7. Also agree to together review the effectiveness of this Understanding and assess progress made in its implementation in 2015 and identify further actions needed.

#### ***INSTITUTIONAL MODALITIES***

8. Decide that the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests will provide the necessary institutional support to this Understanding.