

Mr. Hans Hoogeveen, Chairman, UNFF 7 Bureau

**Meeting of the Chairpersons of the
Functional Commissions and the Council Bureau**

Contribution to the work of the reformed Council

15 January 2007

11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Our meeting last July initiated a fruitful dialogue on how the functional commissions of the ECOSOC could contribute to new functions of the Council to improve policy coherence, foster development priorities and enhance inter-organizational cooperation within the UN system.

In the context of today's meeting, I wish to highlight some features that closely link the UN Forum on Forests to the Council's new mandate and which strongly promote sustainable forest management as a means for achieving greater sustainability in development affairs.

Contributing to ECOSOC's reform

- ❖ Adapting to the new functions of the Council constitutes a critical feature of the UN Forum of Forests. To deliver its renewed mandate and functions, as agreed by the Sixth Session of the UNFF and later adopted by ECOSOC as resolution 2006/49, the Forum will adopt a new multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) at its Seventh Session in April 2007, for an eight year period (2007-2015). There are three key decisions from the Forum's Sixth Session which strengthen the Forum's involvement to the Council's work in the implementation of the broader development agenda. These are:

- 1) Agreement on four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) to achieve the main aim of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and to contribute to the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs - in particular, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability.

These Objectives target actions at national and global levels to:

- *Reverse* the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management (SFM), including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation;
- *Enhance* forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits;
- *Increase* the area of sustainably managed forests, including protected forests, and increase the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests; and
- *Reverse* the decline in official development assistance for SFM and mobilize increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the

implementation of SFM.

The commitment to the four shared GOFs and the commitment to make progress toward achieving them by 2015 are embedded in several sections of ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49.

- 2) Adopt a non-legally binding instrument (NLBI) of all types of forests at the Forum's Seventh Session. Such an instrument will provide a well-articulated, coordinated and practical framework for SFM at all levels and demonstrate clarity, credibility, commitment and continuity of SFM.
- 3) Agreement to perform three new principal functions. Of these functions, one specifically calls governments to enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and to the implementation of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD, bearing in mind the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

An additional function calls for strengthening interaction between the UN Forum on Forests and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organizations and processes, with participation of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21.

This merits attention, as the Forum puts high value on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination.

It will require improved coordination mechanisms amongst the UN regional commissions and other regional bodies, as well as stakeholder groups, to support the implementation of SFM in order to contribute to advancing of the UN development agenda.

Involvement in the AMR and DCF

- ❖ Assiduous in adapting to ever-changing political and development priorities, the Forum has an opportunity to clearly demonstrate cross-sectoral links and results from the implementation of the GOFs, the non-legally binding instrument and its principal functions. Such results would serve as constructive inputs to the Annual Ministerial Reviews (AMR) and the biennial Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).
- ❖ The possibility of developing a global forest financing mechanism to mobilize resources for SFM implementation would also serve as an innovative mechanism to discuss in the DCF.
- ❖ In year 2015, achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the MDGs, will be reviewed, making the review of the International

Arrangement on Forests (IAF) within the Forum's multi-year programme of work that same year critically important.

- ❖ It is also anticipated that the Forum consider at its Seventh Session the slotting of a standing agenda item related to the contribution of forests to broader development goals and their systematic assessment as part of the new multi-year programme of work.
- ❖ A mid-term review of trends and diverse economic, social and environmental benefits derived from goods and services provided by forests and trees outside forests could also be undertaken to benefit the assessment process in the implementation of broader development commitments.

Issues for consideration and discussion

- ❖ Presently, the Forum is in a unique position as it is working on developing the structure and working modalities and on identifying topics for its multi-year programme of work. To ensure contributions from the Forum to the Council, I consider that the following points merit some discussion:

UNFF related questions

- How would input from the Forum be used in the AMR and the DCF and what type of feedback, if any, would be provided by the Council to the Forum.
- Would the AMR receive inputs - in the form of Chairman summaries - from intersessional meetings or ad hoc expert group meetings of the Forum, given that the UNFF after 2007 will meet biennially.
- Could the AMR dedicate a special session on Forests in 2011 in view of the General Assembly Resolution to celebrate the International Year of Forests. Would ECOSOC help organize various events and panel discussions during the AMR in 2011. How could the Forum support the Council in this respect.
- What type of additional resources could be expected from the Council in order to improve policy coherence and enhance the Forum's future contributions to ECOSOC.

General suggestions

- Should ECOSOC not link the work of the commissions to fully integrate, where relevant, the undertaking, effectiveness and assessment of MDG in 2015.
- Should ECOSOC not facilitate greater interaction and dialogue between functional commissions, other subsidiary bodies and the UN regional commissions within panel settings or roundtables to ensure that the General Segment of the Council's

substantive session could be more meaningful when it reviews the outcomes of these bodies.

- Should the Council not go beyond taking note of the reports during the General Segment of the Council's substantive session. Could the Council not call upon selected commissions and bodies which share common thematic mandates to work on specific development-related topics for a future session and to report on its results in a determined year.
- Should the Council's multi-year programme of work for its ministerial-level substantive reviews not harmonize issues and integrate thematic topics for all the functional commissions to report on in fixed years. Should Bureau Chairs not be invited to react on the thematic topics for each year.

Interactions among functional commissions

- ❖ On this last point, I wish to underscore the significance of working closely with other functional commissions to ensure understanding and support of mutual related development concerns. Since the establishment of the Forum, the UNFF has participated in panel and annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In the latter case, the Chairs have periodically addressing each others' official sessions.
- ❖ As the Forum develops its new MYPOW, such collaboration and cooperation efforts, both at the international and regional levels, will undoubtedly feature prominently within the Forum's new work programme. We also anticipate to branch out further and to collaborate in the work of other functional commissions, as well as subsidiary bodies, on issues where we consider we may offer relevant input.
