

Statement by the Chairman of the UNFF-9 Bureau

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On the Occasion of  
the Meeting between the Chairpersons of the Functional Commissions and the  
ECOSOC Bureau

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Mr. President,  
Distinguished Members of the ECOSOC Bureau,  
Distinguished Chairpersons of the sister Functional Commissions of the Council,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to participate in this joint meeting, in my capacity as the Chair of the UNFF-9 Bureau. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to this important responsibility and wish you all the success.

Each subsidiary body has its own specific mandate and focus, nevertheless, this meeting provides a unique opportunity for all the Chairpersons of the functional commissions and the Council Bureau to share their experiences and expectations, and to further advance the mutually supportive goals of these bodies. In our view, this meeting set a format for an effective triangular cooperation and interaction through which the Council will receive inputs from its functional commissions and at the same time, each functional commission benefits from Council's outcome as well as from other functional commissions.

As you are aware, the Forum was established by the Council to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) worldwide which helps combat poverty, enhance livelihoods of millions of people living in and around forests and in rural areas, generate employment and income without compromising environmental sustainability. The Forum has universal membership, consisting of all 192 Member States of the United Nations. It encourages active engagement of international organizations and major groups in its work. The innovative and highly acclaimed Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) – consisting of 14 major international organizations, institutions and instrument secretariats - has become a model of interagency partnership and mobilization of resources and expertise for the common cause of sustainable forest management (SFM).

Mr. President,

On the contribution of the UNFF to the Council, I would like to indicate that the Forum has a specific mandate to enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the MDGs, and thus, is well-placed to contribute to the work of the Council and the upcoming AMR.

In this context, issues with regard to gender equality and empowerment of women have been consistently addressed in different sessions of the UNFF. As a matter of fact, in adopting its Multi-Year Programme of Work for the period 2007-2015, the Forum designed its work in a manner that all environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable forest management to be addressed.

As such, the UNFF8 in 2009 considered “Forests in a changing environment”, in particular in the context of climate change, biodiversity and desertification/deforestation. The upcoming ninth session of the Forum in 2011 has an overall theme of “Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication”, and the tenth session in 2013 has the theme of “Forests and economic development”.

Within this framework, the theme of the 2010 Review, "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women" is an integral part of the Forum's work.

I wish to take this opportunity to briefly inform the meeting participants about some of the outcomes and future occasions that could provide valuable contributions for the thematic discussion of the 2010 AMR on gender equality and empowerment of women.

Mr. President,

The “Non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI)” adopted by the General Assembly in December 2007 provided a new avenue for enhancing gender equality and empowerment of women through fostering international cooperation on sustainable forest management.

One of the primary purposes of the Instrument is to “enhance contribution of forests to the achievement of the millennium Development Goals, in particular with respect to poverty eradication, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Thus, the Instrument is not only a vehicle to promote SFM but is also a significant medium to help to achieve MDGs.

In this Instrument, the Forum also agreed on four Global Objectives on Forests, the pursuit of which provides a more clear and concise path toward the accomplishment of the MDGs pertaining to poverty eradication, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

The Eight session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in April 2009, also adopted the resolution on “Forests in a changing environment”. In this resolution, the Secretariat is requested to seek ways, in consultation with Member States and the CPF, to raise awareness of linkages between SFM and women and youth who depend on and use forest to meet their basic daily needs, including for food, shelter and fuelwood. The resolution demands to highlight this urgent issue at the ninth session of the Forum.

These issues are particularly fit with the social agenda of the UNFF9 and its overall theme on “Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication”, and the secretary General’s reports to the UNFF9 would address the basic needs of women and youth to forests as the source of food, shelter and fuel. In this context, we expect that the UNFF9 to have a focused discussion on the needs and concerns of women who are highly dependent on forests.

Moreover, the same resolution has requested the secretariat to arrange for an interactive panel on the food, energy and economic challenges and opportunities for the implementation of SFM and the achievement of the global objectives on forests in UNFF9. This provides additional opportunity for the UNFF to discuss the issues from the perspective of gender equality and empowerment of women.

In another development, and with the support of the Council, a Special Session of the UNFF9 was held in October last year to adopt the resolution on the means of implementation for SFM. I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the valuable support and assistance provided by the Council and its secretariat which made it possible to hold this session and subsequently to adopt its outcome. In this resolution, the Forum took the same consistent approach on the link of SFM and the MDGs. This resolution stresses that sustainable forest management contributes extensively to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. This resolution set up SFM finance process in which MDGs including gender equality goal will be among the issues that would receive particular attention.

In mobilizing financial resources for sustainable forest management, financing forest related climate change actions, known as REDD+, play crucial role, in particular after the Copenhagen Conference. One major component of the REDD+ activities is the ways and means through which the rights of indigenous people as well as those who are dependent on forests for their livelihood including women are protected. From this perspective, the UNFF finance process, initiated by the

above-mentioned resolution, will again address issues that are closely relevant to empowerment of women.

Mr. President,

On the potentials of ECOSOC to influence the discussion in the Forum as well as other functional commissions, it is evident that the discussion of the upcoming 2010 AMR on gender equality and empowerment of women could also provide valuable input for the functional commissions meetings, like the UNFF9, which meet after the Council session. Moreover, no matter what theme the Council chooses to discuss, there are some cross-cutting issues like natural resources management which are of particular importance to be reflected in the outcome of the Council thematic debate. In spite of our efforts, in the last year's Ministerial Declaration, there is no single reference to natural resource management, in spite of its clear impact and link to the theme of the session (health). Such mutual interaction ensures a constant cooperation process through which Council and the functional commissions support substantive agenda of each other in a truly effective manner.

On the cooperation among the functional commissions, the Forum has strongly supported close working relationships with other functional commissions to enhance the understanding of our mutually inter-related concerns. It has a long tradition of sharing information with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, by Chairs of each body periodically addressing other's sessions, and we would welcome increased collaboration with other Commissions. The Forum has planned to provide relevant input to the Commission on Sustainable Development when it addresses forests in 2012-2013. There is no doubt that working together on related issues from different perspectives enhances effectiveness in resolving problems.

To conclude, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate our appreciation for organizing this important meeting, and to assure you that the UNFF9 Bureau stands ready to work closely with the Council and with all its subsidiary bodies to advance the development agenda of the Organization.

Thank you for your kind attention.