

## **Guidelines for Country- and Organization-led Initiatives in Support of UNFF**

### **I. Background on Country- and Organization-led Initiatives**

One of the most notable characteristics of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and Intergovernmental Forum on Forest (IPF/IFF) process was the strong political will to reach consensus at the IPF and IFF sessions on many complex issues concerning international forest policy. Significant support to the IPF/IFF process derived from many international meetings held between IPF and IFF sessions.<sup>1</sup>

During the IPF and the IFF, these country- and organization-led initiatives were co-sponsored by both developed and developing countries, as well as international organizations, including NGOs. Many of the complex and politically sensitive issues concerning forests were extensively discussed and analyzed in these meetings. They helped considerably the consensus building process at the IPF and the IFF sessions.

### **II. Country- and Organization-led Initiatives in Support of UNFF**

In view of the significant contributions made by country- and organization-led initiatives in support of the IPF/IFF process, the UNFF at its first session (E/2001/42/Rev.1) invited the timely convening of such initiatives to facilitate the work of the UNFF. The activities of the Forum, including meetings, country-led initiatives and other inter-sessional work, will facilitate and promote the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, as outlined in Forum Resolution 1/1 on its multi-year programme of work.<sup>2</sup>

The UNFF Secretariat welcomes the efforts of Governments and organizations to sponsor initiatives in relation to the themes outlined in the multi-year programme of work of the UNFF, mainly to facilitate and promote the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

The Secretariat would also like to reiterate the provisions of paragraph 12 of the Report of the First Session of the IFF (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4), welcoming proposals made by Governments to organize expert meetings or to conduct studies in support of the Forum's work and welcoming, in particular, regional approaches.

As presented in paragraph 12 (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4), “ *the Forum suggested that all countries and organizations planning or proposing to organize meetings or expert consultations relevant to the work of the Forum should be guided by the following principles:*

- (a) Such meetings or expert consultations should be informal in nature;*
- (b) They should strive to be in full conformity with the tasks assigned to the Forum;*
- (c) They should be of an open-ended, transparent and participatory nature;*
- (d) They should strive for balanced representation from countries, reflecting a range of interests and views of all interested parties; particular attention should be paid to the participation of women experts;*
- (e) They should ensure that the timing and topic under consideration harmonize as far as possible with the schedule of work of the Forum;*
- (f) The organizers, in the course of their preparations, should consult with the Co-Chairpersons, the Bureau and the secretariat of the Forum, as appropriate;*

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<sup>1</sup> During the IPF/IFF process there were 21 country- and international organization-led initiatives, in the form of international meetings, to support the work of the Panel and the Forum.

<sup>2</sup> E/2001/42/Rev.1 Plan of Action paragraph 4

(g) *Such meetings or expert consultations should be invited to prepare a report to be presented to the Forum.*

The Secretariat believes that the results of such country- and organization-led initiatives provide valuable expert input to the work of the UNFF. These initiatives do not have official status as inter-sessional meetings, however, so any decisions on policy recommendations, made by these initiatives, would rest with the Forum itself.

### **III. Notification of Intent to Organize a Country- or Organization-led Initiative**

Normally Governments announce, at a UNFF session, their intent to organize a country-led initiative in support of the Forum, although this is not always the case.

The Secretariat kindly asks the organizer of country- and organization-led initiatives to send the Secretariat a written proposal of their initiative, including a list of co-sponsors, the objectives of the meeting, the issues to be discussed, the venue and date, and estimated participation.

The Secretariat requests that the proposals of country- and organization-led initiatives be submitted to:

Mr. Pekka Patosaari  
Coordinator and Head, UNFF Secretariat  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Two UN Plaza, Room DC2-2286  
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA  
Tel: (212) 963-3401  
Fax: (917) 367-3186  
E-mail: [Patosaari@un.org](mailto:Patosaari@un.org)

The Secretariat is pleased to offer its technical advice and support in the planning of country-led and organization-led initiatives, and to attend the meetings to lend whatever support requested by the organizers.

### **IV. Transmittal of the Final Report of the Initiative**

The final report of a country- or organization-led initiative will become an official document of the UNFF session, if it is officially transmitted to the United Nations. The final report or summary report of the initiative should be officially transmitted to the Secretary General of the UN by the host country, through its Mission's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

It is urged that the final report or summary report, including the transmittal letter from the Mission, be a maximum of 16 pages (7000 words) and submitted to the Secretary General's office at least two months prior to the UNFF session. The Secretariat urges the host country and or organization to meet these requirements since the final reports must be translated into all six UN official languages for distribution at the UNFF sessions.