

Summary Report of the CPF Network Meeting 7 March 2002, New York

The first meeting of the CPF Network was held on 7 March from 1:15–2:45 at the Millennium Hotel in New York. The meeting was held in conjunction with the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (4–15 March). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Hosny El-Lakany, Assistant Director-General of FAO and Chairman of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). About 60 persons attended the meeting, including representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (16), intergovernmental organizations (16), governments (17), private sector (6) and UNFF Secretariat (3).

1. Opening of the meeting and establishment of the CPF Network

In his opening remarks, Mr. El-Lakany highlighted that many organizations, institutions, instruments and processes, including NGOs, indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and other major groups can play important roles in supporting the work of the UNFF. The CPF Network is established to facilitate interface, cooperation and communication among a wide range of forest-related partners.

2. Presentation of the CPF Network Concept Paper

Mr. El-Lakany presented the CPF Network Concept Paper, which had been prepared and circulated prior to the CPF Network meeting. The document was based on a questionnaire distributed to UNFF major group representatives and CPF members. The first draft of the Concept Paper had been widely circulated for comments, which were incorporated in the final draft. The final draft had been translated into French and Spanish and is available on the UNFF website. The CPF Network Concept Paper was well received. However, it was decided that the draft should be circulated one more time for comments, before being finalized.

3. Discussion of the CPF Network: functions, participation and working modalities

Functions of the CPF Network

The objectives and functions of the CPF Network were discussed. It was stressed that the main objectives of the CPF Network are information sharing and facilitation of cooperation among the wide range of stakeholders involved in forests and working in support of the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF).

Participation of the CPF Network

Participants welcomed the open participation and informal nature of the CPF Network. The CPF Network is open to all interested individuals and international, regional and national organizations, institutions, instruments and processes, such as regional processes, development banks, environmental and development NGOs, IPOs, the scientific community, private sector entities and other major groups.

Working Modalities

Nature of the Network and its relationship to the UNFF Multi-stakeholder dialogue

It was stressed that the CPF Network is not a policy nor decision making arrangement. It is an informal network whose purpose is primarily to increase information sharing and involve a wide range of stakeholders in the work of the CPF for the support of the UNFF, in particular the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. In this regard, it is recognized that individual CPF members have established mechanisms for the communication with and involvement of stakeholders in their activities, and the CPF Network should be seen as complimentary to these.

Some participants sought clarification of the relationship between UNFF's multi-stakeholder dialogue and the CPF Network. In short, the multi-stakeholder dialogue is a dialogue on issues related to the policy deliberations in UNFF. It is a direct mechanism for UNFF to receive and consider inputs from major groups. The CPF Network, on the other hand, is an informal arrangement for meaningful involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the work of the CPF, through sharing information and in particular in supporting the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Issue oriented network

Some participants stressed that the CPF Network should be issue oriented and primarily focus on implementation of the IPF and IFF proposals for action. It was suggested that communication and collaboration could be facilitated by using the 16 UNFF Elements as an organizing framework. Some participants pointed out that the CPF Network should not only be a network at the international level but also at the national level.

Meetings

In addition to the general meetings during UNFF sessions, CPF Network meetings could be organized at other fora and occasions, where appropriate. Some participants expressed interest in meeting during COP-6 (April 2002) and the WSSD (August 2002).

It was decided that CPF Network meetings are to be co-chaired in the future, by one CPF member and one other stakeholder.

One issue that was raised was funding to enable participation in CPF Network meetings, especially for IPOs. It was indicated that it is up to the individual CPF members to consider such possibilities on an individual basis. The Chair indicated that the CPF would discuss this issue at its next meeting.

Communication

Communication among participants should be primarily through electronic means. However, it was noted that hard copies of documentation should be made available and distributed to the extent possible.

Other issues

Some participants indicated that they would like to be able to participate as observers in the CPF meetings, with the aim of making the CPF more open and transparent. Currently, the CPF meetings are attended by the CPF members only, except when an invitation is extended to an organization to attend for a particular reason. CPF does, however share the results of its meeting openly by making the summary reports from the meetings available on the UNFF website.

Next steps

The following next steps were agreed:

- UNFF Secretariat to send out an invitation to join the CPF Network to a wide group, such as the UNFF mailing list and the Directory of Forest-related International Organizations.
- CPF Network participants would be given an additional month to review and provide comments on the Concept Paper. Based on comments received, the UNFF Secretariat would prepare a final version, share it with the Network and post in on the website.
- Explore the possibility of organizing a CPF Network meeting during COP-6 of the CBD and/or WSSD.
- UNFF Secretariat to include activities of the CPF Network in CPF web site and newsletter.