

Summary of United Nations Forum on Forests Multi-Stakeholder Consultation

16 June 2004, Conference Call

In Attendance:

Ghazal Badiozamani, UN Forum on Forests Secretariat
Mary Columbe, International Council of Forest and Paper Associations
Richard Fuckner, International Forestry Students Association
Jeannette Gurung, Women Organizing for Change in Natural Resources Management
Natalie Hufnagl, Confederation of European Forest Owners
Aniina Kostelienan, International Forestry Students Association
Andrei Laletin, Friends of Siberian Forests
Xavier Ndonga Makusa, Initiatives-Jeunes
Joel Neuheimer, International Council of Forest and Paper Associations
Annable Pinker, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropics
Kittisak Rattanakrangsri, International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropics
William Street, International Federation of Building and Wood Workers
Peter Wood, International Forestry Students Association
Atse Yapi, International Union of Forest Research Organizations - SPDC/ Fornessa

Opening of the Meeting

Ms. Badiozamani opened the meeting and introduced Mr. Joel Neuheimer of the Forest Products Association of Canada to the group. Mr. Neuheimer stated that the President of his organization had also taken over the presidency of the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations and that although Ms. Columbe would continue to be the main focal point, he is interested in participating to a greater extent in this process.

Assessment of UNFF4 – what worked, what can be improved

The meeting began with a discussion of the outcomes of the fourth UNFF session. Although the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue went quite well at this session, there are still a number of areas where improvements can be made. In terms of the logistical planning of the event, some groups expressed concern about the last minute planning of the themes to be discussed and the ground rules for the dialogue. Mr. Wood stated that perhaps the stakeholder consultation at the session itself should be held right at the beginning of the session as a number of participants had already been in Geneva for several days before the session began. Although he expressed some concern regarding the amount of time spent on the consensus/synthesis paper, Ms. Hufnagl emphasized the importance of this paper and the warm response it received from a number of governments. With regard to the format of the MSD itself, Ms. Hufnagl suggested that the group consider ways of inviting delegates to speak more on their own behalf as in an expert group meeting to encourage a more dynamic discussion. She suggested that perhaps it would be interesting to start the session with a set of presentations expressing opposing viewpoints that could then spark a more engaging discussion. Ms. Columbe also reflected on the need to create more opportunities for give-and-take rather than just simply delivery of statements.

Both Mr. Laletin and Ms. Pinker expressed concern regarding the impact of the MSD on the rest of the session, stating that there was little evidence that governments had taken the discussions to heart during the second week of negotiation. They and others expressed a need to find ways of better integrating stakeholder perspectives into the rest of the session. Ms. Pinker stated that if

stakeholders were able to make interventions directly during the drafting of resolutions, they would be better able to make useful and substantive contributions based on their expertise. This was particularly true of the negotiations regarding TFRK. Others stated that the resolutions and the official final report should not be seen as the only outcome of the UNFF but that there were a number of successful deliberations and contacts made outside of the plenary sessions. The side events were found to be particularly useful for Mr. Fuckner and others who used the opportunity to advance organization and group specific goals. Mr. Fuckner stated that he would be initiating a survey on the potential for cooperation among major group participants in the near future.

CPF recommendations

Ms. Badiozamani stated that on the first Friday of the UNFF session, the CPF had held a CPF Network meeting at which recommendations made by stakeholders to CPF were discussed. Mr. Mr. Hosny El-Lakany, Assistant Director-General of FAO and Chair of the CPF had requested stakeholders to submit their recommendations for improving the work of the CPF and its member organizations to him for distribution. Mr. Street would like to propose that all focal points take a second look at their discussion papers and statements made during the session to compile such recommendations and send them to either Mr. Street or Ms. Badiozamani for forwarding to Mr. El-Lakany.

Briefing on Indigenous People's Organization-Led Initiative (International Alliance)

Mr. Rattanakrajang Sri provided a brief summary of the progress to date on the planning for the forthcoming Expert Group Meeting on Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge and the Implementation of Relevant International Agreements, an organization-led initiative headed by the International Alliance of Tribal and Indigenous Peoples of the Tropics. He stated that the meeting would be held in San Jose, Costa Rica on 6-10 December 2004. A number of case studies have been commissioned and are underway. The Convention on Biological Diversity has also slated TFRK as the topic of discussion on their forest stakeholder web portal:

<http://www.biodiv.org/programmes/areas/forest/portal/home.shtml>

Approximately 60-70 % of the required funds for the meeting have been raised and responses to further proposals are expected in the next few weeks. Thus far all of the major European donor countries as well as the United States have been approached in addition to the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. Focal Points were requested to submit any other ideas for potential funding sources to the International Alliance.

The objective of the meeting will be "to identify ways to improve national implementation of international commitments on indigenous peoples, local communities and traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK)". The final report of the meeting will be submitted to the UNFF as an official background document to UNFF5. Although TFRK was discussed at the fourth session, this expert meeting is seen as a way to keep the issue on the table and ensure that it is taken up again at future sessions of the UNFF.

Planning for the Ad-Hoc Expert Group in September

Ms. Badiozamani stated that stakeholders would be invited to participate in the forthcoming Ad Hoc Expert Group as observers and may be called upon for their expertise at the discretion of the chair. She stated that there was support within the Secretariat to organize a major group event during the meeting to provide stakeholders with a space to present their views.

Many expressed concern with the limited time-frame leading up to the meeting and the long process of consultation that would be required to present group positions. It was agreed that representatives

of stakeholder groups would be invited to participate in any event solely as experts and any papers submitted would not be official documents but serve as related documents that could be distributed in conjunction with the event. The idea of a panel discussion and roundtable were discussed. It was agreed that a panel discussion could be held during the last hour of a plenary session (from 12:00 to 13:00) and then carry over into a more open roundtable discussion for interested parties during a side-event slot. Such an event could also be continued or followed at a series of other side events at UNFF5.

Some expressed a concern with holding a substantive discussion, stating that it would be premature to discuss the pros and cons of a possible convention at this stage. Ms. Badiozamani stated that this would indeed be inappropriate as the purpose of the Expert Group was to consider all existing legally binding and non-legally binding instruments as well as current needs to present possible options for UNFF5. Rather, the event could focus on a particular theme of relevance to the discussions at the meeting. Ms. Colombe suggested the theme of integrating participation of stakeholders. Ms. Badiozamani suggested that focal points study the terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Expert Group to determine in which areas stakeholders could make a valuable contribution. These can be found at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-legal.html>

Focal Points were requested to consider possible themes and experts they would nominate for such an event in time for the next conference call.

Ms. Badiozamani also stated that registration for the event would be similar to that of UNFF4 and nomination letters from ECOSOC accredited organizations would have to be submitted to the UNFF Secretariat no later than 20 August 2004.

It was also agreed that a face-to-face stakeholder consultation would be held at the end of the Ad Hoc Expert Group meeting to continue planning for UNFF5.

Thinking about UNFF5

Ms. Badiozamani stated that there will be intensive preparation this year for the fifth session of the UNFF. As part of the review process, countries and major groups will be asked to submit baseline information regarding the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action to date. They will also be requested to complete questionnaires relating to the 21 specific criteria of the review as delineated in UNFF2. Such a questionnaire and request for submissions will be distributed by the Secretariat in mid-July. Focal Points are encouraged to share this request with organizations in their networks and submit input as they deem appropriate and possible given resource constraints.

As for the participation of stakeholders at the event itself, a number of possibilities were discussed. One idea is to have a half-day traditional MSD during the first week of the session and then integrate high-level stakeholder representatives into the Ministerial Roundtables scheduled for the beginning of the second week. Although the plan for the Ministerial segment has not been finalized, one idea is to have a series of roundtables covering the topics of Land Use, Forests and Conflicts, and Innovative Financing. Because of the difficulty in securing the participation of high-level speakers, Focal Points were requested to begin the process of identifying possible representatives before the next conference call.

Assignment of Follow Up

All Focal Points are requested to:

1. submit recommendations made during UNFF to CPF and its member organizations to Mr. Street no later than 30 June 2004
2. consider possible themes and experts they would nominate for such an event in time for the next conference call
3. submit nomination letters for participation in the Ad Hoc Expert Group from ECOSOC accredited organizations no later than 20 August 2004
4. compile a list of heads of key organizations to be engaged before UNFF5 and for possible participation in the Ministerial Roundtables no later than 15 July 2004.

It was agreed that the next conference call would be held on 20 July 2004.