

Suggestion Note on Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue for UNFF3

I. Background

ECOSOC resolution E/2000/35 established the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and determined that the Forum should operate in a transparent and participatory manner. Furthermore, the same resolution made multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) an integral part of UNFF sessions, intended as an opportunity to receive and consider inputs from representatives of major groups. Thus, UNFF welcomes the participation of major groups as identified in Agenda 21:

- 1) women
- 2) children and youth
- 3) indigenous peoples
- 4) NGOs
- 5) local authorities
- 6) workers and trade unions
- 7) business and industry
- 8) scientific and technological community
- 9) farmers.

The first UNFF MSD took place at the second session of UNFF in March 2002, and while this experience overall was positive, both States members and major groups agreed that the issues discussed within UNFF can benefit from broader participation and a more specific, stakeholder-planned MSD process. The UNFF is dedicated to facilitating the contribution of major groups to UNFF sessions and provides for consideration, the following suggestions gleaned through consultation and comments received from States members and major groups.

II. Suggested UNFF MSD Elements

Several partners have noted that the UNFF Secretariat should have very little to do with organization of the substance of the MSD session itself. The UNFF Secretariat might facilitate the logistics of the MSD process, but management of the discussion might best be left to the major groups themselves. With that point in mind, the UNFF Secretariat proposes five elements, gleaned through consultation and comments received from States members and major groups, that it might be appropriate for the UNFF Secretariat to facilitate.

1) Stakeholder Analysis: Who are the major group stakeholders of UNFF?

A stakeholder analysis is being undertaken to update our UNFF network database, and expand UNFF outreach. Several questions guide our analysis:

- Who are the stakeholders & major groups currently within UNFF?
- What major groups need increased represented?
- How can we increase representation of these groups?
- Which stakeholders are ECOSOC accredited?
- How can we broaden the UNFF Network? (consult CSD, CPF, other major group networks)

Initial analyses indicate the following number of representatives of each major group within the data-based network of the UNFF Secretariat:

1. Workers and Trade Unions	1
2. Women	2
3. Children and Youth	2
4. Local Authorities	3
5. Farmers	3
6. Indigenous Peoples Groups	19
7. Business and Industry	43
8. Scientific and Technical Community	57
9. NGOs	341
IGO	144
Governments	824

The UNFF Secretariat is working to compile as complete a list as possible of the major group players, with particular attention to under-represented groups.

2) Initiate a UNFF MSD Focal Point System

UNFF MSD might profit from a fluid, flexible structure around which to organize its planning and discussions. In that vein, the UNFF Secretariat suggests a focal points system similar to that used within the CSD MSD process, in which each major group network nominates one focal point within each of the nine major groups. In hopes of catalyzing this stakeholder focal point selection, the UNFF Secretariat offers in annex a list of elements to consider when nominating a focal point to initiate discussion.

3) Facilitate a MSD Major Group Consultation in late 2002 / early 2003

Several crucial questions still need to be discussed and elaborated within the UNFF major group stakeholders.

- What can MSD concretely provide to the UNFF and forest actions?
- What concrete outcomes should we expect and what form might they take?
- How should major groups organize themselves to best take advantage of MSD at UNFF3?

Obviously, there is still doubt as to what MSD can concretely achieve within global forest policy in general and UNFF in particular. To clarify this, it might make sense for the UNFF Secretariat to encourage a UNFF major group Consultation meeting, encouraging the participation of the UNFF3 Bureau, to be chaired by whomever major groups choose.

Depending on the response received from major groups, this Consultation might be held anywhere between November 2002 and February 2003, as input from this proposed meeting would ideally be formally submitted to UNFF3 as "Discussion Starter Papers". Funds can be made available to support attendees and these participants should be from developing countries, have good regional balance and most importantly be nominated by the major group stakeholders themselves, perhaps through a Focal Point system.

4) Suggest a Draft Outline for Discussion Starter Papers

Depending on interest, one discussion starter paper per major group could be formally presented to the UNFF session at the MSD and address each of the substantive items being treated at the current UNFF session. For UNFF3, for example, the outlines might suggest that discussion be around the UNFF3 elements, which would also ensure that major group contributions are directly relevant to the UNFF3 discussions in working groups and in plenary. The Secretariat offers to provide a draft logistics format for the papers, suggesting page lengths, topics, etc. to the major group focal points, which, in turn, would develop the paper in close collaboration and consultation with the stakeholders within the particular major group network.

5) Ensure MSD Friendly UNFF Session Logistics

Several suggestions for a more discussion oriented, MSD exchange have been provided by major groups and States members including:

- Suggest / appoint an accomplished discussion facilitator, perhaps a high level minister, to catalyze discussion in UNFF3
- Ensuring that the MSD dialogue is arranged in chambers conducive to interactive dialogue
- A mechanism for major groups to substantively comment on MSD Chair's Summary should be organized. For example:
 1. MSD session takes place: Tue
 2. Chair's Summary posted: Tue evening
 3. major groups review and comment to UNFF Sec: Wed – Thur
 4. Chair's Summary presented in Plenary: Fri
- Besides a major group consultation meeting sometime between Nov – Feb 2003, a UNFF major group Consultation Meeting 2 can take place the Sunday before UNFF3. Provision of facilities for a second consultation can be explored.

Annex: Elements to Consider in nominating a UNFF major group Focal Point

These elements are meant to initiate discussion on appropriate persons to nominate as a UNFF major group focal point. The objectives and requirements outlined here are merely suggestions. The UNFF major group focal point should not be viewed as the ultimate spokes person of the major group he / she represents, but more as a coordinator of views to ensure that the voices of the major group in question are heard within the UNFF process, in particular within UNFF MSD sessions. Further, the focal point system should be as representative as possible in terms of: a) developed / developing countries b) gender c) major groups d) region e) forest ecosystem type.

Objectives of a UNFF major group focal point

1. To serve as the main conduit of information between the UNFF Secretariat and the major group
2. To receive and coordinate the views / suggestions of those within its representative network to provide balanced input to the UNFF process
3. To develop, in close consultation with its representative network, discussion starter papers for presentation and discussion at the next UNFF MSD session.
4. To take the lead within its major group to discuss other possibilities for encouraging participating within UNFF

Requirements of a UNFF major group Focal Point

1. Have Attended past IPF/IFF/UNFF sessions
2. Active in forest issues, especially in the three UNFF3¹ discussion elements (Forest Health & Productivity, Economic Aspects of Forests and Maintaining Forest Cover to Meet Present and Future Needs)
3. Knows and is recognized within its representative major group network as a leader in issues relevant to the major group
4. Capacity to maintain dialogue with a wide representative network via email, fax, or snail communication
5. Preferably be a representative of a ECOSOC accredited NGO. (See the most updated list at <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>)

¹ This point, along with objective that the major group focal point would facilitate development of a discussion starter paper around UNFF elements discussed at each session, implies that UNFF focal points might rotate annually, since UNFF elements change at every UNFF Session. Focal Points might change depending on the issues discussed during the particular session.