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The Fourth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 4), 3 – 14 May 2004 (United Nations, Geneva)

Preparations are nearly complete for the Fourth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 4), which will be held from 3 – 14 May 2004 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The session will consider implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) in five areas: social and cultural aspects of forests; traditional forest-related knowledge; scientific forest-related knowledge; monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions; and criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management. The session will also address enhanced cooperation, including among members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and between UNFF and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and a proposal to facilitate the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at UNFF 5. In addition, Member States will consider the recommendations of the ad hoc expert groups Meetings on: approaches and mechanisms for monitoring, assessment and reporting, and finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, which were held in December 2003 in Geneva. Official documentation and additional documents related to UNFF4 are posted on the UNFF website at: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

Special Events at UNFF 4

The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2003 recognized the significance of sustainable forest management with regard to the special needs of Africa, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The themes of the high-level and coordination segments of ECOSOC for 2004 focused on poverty eradication, coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promote rural development in developing countries with due consideration to LDCs and sustainable development. In response to the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration and as a contribution to the high-level coordination segment of ECOSOC 2004 the UNFF Secretariat will organize three special events to highlight the role of sustainable forest management in rural development and poverty eradication in Africa and Small Island Developing States, and the role of forests in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. . The three half-day events will be held during UNFF 4 in the form of panel discussions

Special Event: Millennium Development Goals Day

A panel of speakers will look at the interaction between forests and poverty focusing on the linkages between sustainable forest management and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals of poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability.

Special Event: Africa Day

To focus attention on progress made in sustainable forest management (SFM) in Africa, a panel of speakers will share knowledge and lessons learned in the challenges of SFM and implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in Africa.

Special Event: Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Day

UNFF 4 aims to contribute to the preparations for the Summit which will be held to review the 10 years of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 meeting on Small Island Developing Countries in Barbados, 1994. The panel discussion will focus on the role of forests and trees outside forests in the SIDS.

The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at UNFF4: Renewing the Focus on Implementation

The UNFF Secretariat organizes a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) as part of the annual UNFF session. The MSD provides an opportunity for an exchange of views and experience between civil society organizations working toward sustainable forest management in the field and government representatives.

In an effort to increase interaction of all participants, this year's MSD will take place over a 2 day period. The first half will undertake a general discussion of key elements of the themes of UNFF4. The second session will be organized into two working groups – one focusing on the experience with capacity building, and the other on the elements of successful partnerships. The working

group settings and implementation focused themes are expected to encourage greater dialogue and provide a format for a more in-depth analysis of emerging issues.

Five major groups have submitted discussion papers for consideration during the MSD. The discussion papers are available as advance unedited copies on the UNFF website. Groups are in the process of coordinating a synthesis paper that will highlight issues of consensus and disagreement. The synthesis paper will also be available on the web and distributed at UNFF 4. For further information, please see: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents-unff.html#4>

Workshop on “Lessons Learned on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa” (9 – 13 February 2004, Nairobi, Kenya)

The workshop on lessons learned on sustainable forest management in Africa was held from 9 to 13 February. It was part of a Swedish country-led initiative in support of UNFF. It was organized by the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) through the by the African Forestry Research Network (AFRONET), the Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry (KSLA), and the FAO Forestry Department. The main purpose of the workshop was to critically analyze selected cases studies for lessons learned on sustainable forest management in Africa. The workshop's key findings will be presented at UNFF 4.

Fifty officials from African countries involved nationally or regionally with forests and forestry participated in the workshop.

A concluding seminar is scheduled to be held in Sweden in October this year. The seminar will draw participation from regional bodies, such as the African Union, Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and from donor organizations.

Workshop on Strengthening Regional Action – Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in Africa and the Fourteenth Session of African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (16-20 February, Accra, Ghana)

The Regional Workshop on Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action in Africa was organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), co-sponsored by the US Department of State/USDA Forest Service and hosted by the Government of Ghana. The workshop was held from 16 to 18 February 2004, in conjunction with the 14th Session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission.

The workshop focused on how to facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in African countries, to foster sub-regional and regional cooperation, and to strengthen the involvement and participation of African countries in the international forest processes.

Representatives from 20 countries in Africa and outside the region, members of CPF and other international, regional and sub-regional organizations, private sector and NGOs participated in the workshop. The workshop provided a forum to exchange country experiences and was organized around three issues: trade; rehabilitation of degraded lands; and enhancing sub-regional and regional cooperation. A report of the meeting is available at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry>

Global Workshop on the Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and Capacity Building for Sustainable Forest Management (Brazzaville, Congo, 23-27 February)

The Global Workshop on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs) and capacity building for sustainable forest management (SFM) was held in Brazzaville, Congo in late February. The workshop was hosted by the Republic of Congo in support of the UNFF. It was a country-led initiative aimed at identifying key forest-related technologies for which transfer poses problems and barriers to the enabling conditions for the successful transfer of key ESTs. Participants looked at ways to facilitate technology transfer and the successful implementation of the technologies and knowledge identified and requested. The workshop's efforts built on the results of the UNFF Ad

Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies which met in December 2003.

Seventy two representatives from 49 countries and 19 representatives from international organizations and major groups attended the workshop. For further information go to: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/cli/brazzafinalreport.pdf>

FAO/ITTO Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, (Cebu City, the Philippines 2-5 March)

The FAO/ITTO Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators (ECCI-2004), which was held from 2 to 5 March, made many recommendations for the consideration of UNFF 4. The objectives of ECCI-2004 were as follows: to improve communication and information management to enhance the implementation of criteria and indicators; to improve common understanding of concepts, terms and

definitions related to criteria and indicators; and to strengthen criteria and indicator processes.

The outcomes of the consultation are relevant to the discussions at UNFF4 on criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management. A link to the report of ECCI-2004 will be put on the UNFF website when available.

UNFF 4 Bureau 13 April at UN Headquarters in New York.

The UNFF 4 Bureau will have its fourth meeting on 12 April in New York. On 13 April, the UNFF4 Bureau will hold an informal consultation to discuss preparations for the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests (New

York, 6-10 September 2004). An information note prepared for UNFF4 by the UNFF Secretariat on progress in the preparation of documents for this expert group and further information on the AHEG is available on: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-legal.html>

Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) on-line forum for forest-related projects funding

CPF and the National Forest Programme Facility have set up an on-line forum to allow people to share information, ideas and experiences on funding forest-related projects. Information on the on-line forum is available in English at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/17261/en> and in French at: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/17261/fr>. For more

information and guidance on how to post messages, see go to:

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/pageview.jsp?pageId=25608&langId=1>

Fourth meeting of the CPF Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting, 29-30 March, Montreal, Canada

The CPF Task Force met on 29 and 30 March in Montreal at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to elaborate a project proposal for the development of a forest reporting information service (FRIS). This service would facilitate access to and use of forest-related information reported by countries to international organizations, conventions and agreements on the situation and trends in forests and on actions taken to implement international commitments. The foreseen benefits would be to reduce the reporting

burden on countries, enhance consistency and comparability of information, improve coordination among national focal points and among the reporting processes and reduce overlap and improve synchronization of information requests. The proposal is to be presented in a CPF side event at UNFF4.

UNFF staff goes on retreat, 9-10 March

The staff of the UNFF Secretariat held a retreat to consider the UNFFS Strategy for the planning period 2006-2007. The staff revised the Strategy and identified key priority activities and related expected accomplishments for the UNFF Secretariat for the planning period 2004-2005. The retreat was held from 9 to 10 March and was a continuation of an earlier retreat held in November 2003.

Informal Newsletter
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The UNFF newsletter aims to provide updated information on matters related to the international arrangement on forests.

This informal newsletter is produced and distributed electronically by the UNFF Secretariat. If you wish to subscribe to this free newsletter contact the Secretariat at:
<http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

Event Announcements

19-23 April 2004

FAO Regional Forestry Commission Meeting will be held in Fiji. The meeting is organized by the FAO Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APEC)

27-30 April 2004

The Country-led initiative in Support of UNFF: Decentralization, Federal Systems in Forestry and National Forest Programmes will be held in Interlaken, Switzerland. The initiative is organized by the Governments of Indonesia and Switzerland, the UNFF Secretariat and CIFOR.
<http://buwal.ch/forst/d/index.htm>

3-14 May 2004

Fourth Session of UNFF (UNFF 4) to be held at the United Nations in Geneva

10-21 May 2004

Third Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues organized by the Indigenous People's Forum Secretariat
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/pfii/>