

United Nations
Forum on Forests



The Global Objectives on Forests aim to:

- (i) Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through SFM, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;
- (ii) Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people;
- (iii) Increase significantly the area of protected forests and other sustainably managed forests, and increase the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests; and
- (iv) Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS SETS FOUR AMBITIOUS GLOBAL OBJECTIVES ON FORESTS TO STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TOWARD SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

After two weeks of intense negotiations, the sixth session of the UN Forum on Forests (13-24 February 2006) reached an agreement on the future direction of international forest policy. Member States agreed on a resolution strengthening the international arrangement on forests (IAF).

The draft ECOSOC resolution provides a clear roadmap on how to intensify the efforts for the advancement of sustainable forest management (SFM) worldwide within a ten-year period. It sets out four Global Objectives on Forests that highlight the urgent priorities for promoting SFM, curbing deforestation and forest degradation, and enhancing the contribution of forests to the achievement of international development goals.

The sixth session infused a much-needed positive tone in the efforts to strengthen international and national-level collaboration on implementing the Global Objectives. It gave clear guidance on the Forum's future work, focusing on implementation of actions to achieve SFM and on regional approaches in implementation. It called for a stronger mandate for the Forum, to enable it to provide guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), to improve enhanced collaboration and policy and programme coordination, and to further develop close partnerships with multi-lateral environmental agreements.

In addition, it reflects the commitment of Governments to improve the means of implementation, especially funding mechanisms, capacity-building and other ways to facilitate implementation of SFM. The resolution contains recommendations such as strengthening aid flows and Global

Environment Facility (GEF) funding for sustainable forest management, as well as those generated from within the forest sector itself.

The Forum decided to consider and adopt a non-legally binding instrument (Non-LBI) on forests at its seventh session. An open-ended ad hoc working group will meet to consider the content of a non-legally binding instrument prior to the seventh session. The Forum, which has been in existence for five years, will review the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests in 2015.

In addition, the Forum decided to recommend that the General Assembly, at its 61st session, proclaim 2010 as the International Year of Forests.

Ambassador Judith Bahemuka, Chairperson of the Bureau of the sixth session, thanked Member States for the highly successful meeting and for agreeing on a robust resolution with new commitments for international cooperation and national actions. Now that the Forum had decided on the way forward for the international arrangement on forests, she urged Governments to focus on translating the visions expressed into actions on the ground.



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE UNFF6 BUREAU

The successful completion of the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF6) marked an important milestone both for the Forum and the international community concerned about the environment. The positive outcome confirmed the recognition of the prime importance of forests for economic development, environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation. We ought to be proud of the outcome, and continue to work together for its implementation and ensure that trees and forest resources effectively contribute to the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including Millennium Development Goals.

I was very impressed by the way delegations worked relentlessly to arrive at a consensus on a number of difficult issues including the one on the “instrument”. The fact that agreement was arrived on the need to develop a non-legally binding instrument and the possibility of reviewing the international arrangement on forests (IAF) by 2015 was motivation enough for the international community to positively agree on relevant programmes and projects that would ensure sustainable forest management. It is therefore, up to the international community guided by the Secretariat and the successive Bureaux to ensure that the gains made during UNFF6 are sustained.

I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all delegations, organizations, and individuals who worked with me during my tenure as Chairman of the Bureau of the UNFF6.

I believe that it was only through individual and collective effort that we were able to get a positive outcome from the session and the entire process. It is my hope that the successive Bureaux and the secretariat of the Forum will continue to receive cooperation and support in their endeavours to implement and build on the UNFF6 outcome.

I thank you all and look forward to continue working closely with you on related issues.

H.E. Prof. Judith Mbula Bahemuka
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Kenya to the
United Nations



VIEWS FROM THE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS ON THE UNFF6 OUTCOME

As part of an effort to showcase the diverse views expressed by Member States and organizations on the outcome of the sixth session, the newsletter will include a segment on views. In this issue, we have included views from Australia and the United States. Additional views will be presented in our next issue.

View from Australia

Australia is enthusiastic about the outcomes from UNFF6, with a strengthened IAF, new modalities which include improving interactions with regional organizations, and a willingness to finalize the non-legally binding instrument by UNFF7, we believe that UNFF together with its member countries and CPF partners will make significant contributions to improving the management, conservation and sustainable development of the world's forests. It is a great outcome, albeit with significant compromise from many parties, that provides a clear impetus for more action to address the challenges facing the forests.



Tony Bartlett,
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
of Australia

View from United States

We view the UNFF6 outcome as a positive one, especially in light of the failed UNFF5 session. The interests of most countries appear to have been met. It is helpful that the question of negotiating a forest treaty has been put to one side for the time being since there is clearly no consensus among governments and the matter has proved a distraction to substantive forest discussions for many years. We will actively engage in developing a voluntary instrument on forests. In our experience, voluntary approaches are often far more effective than regulatory ones in achieving desired goals.

We hope the four global objectives on forests agreed at UNFF 6 will prove useful tools for raising political interest in forests in capitals. They may also help focus forest discussions, nationally and internationally. Our principal goal, however, continues to be sustainable forest management, which is the main objective of the international arrangement on forests.

We welcome the Forum's recognition of the importance of regional approaches to forests and regional inputs to the global forest policy dialogue. We look forward to working with others to put in place a rational and focused multi-year programme of work for the Forum at its seventh session. In doing so, we hope the format of UNFF biennial meetings can increasingly move away from traditional UN-style text negotiations toward an exchange of practical experiences, lessons learned and opportunities for cooperation among knowledgeable people.



Stephanie Caswell,
US State Department

PEKKA'S CORNER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Let me once again congratulate the delegates of the Member States on the successful outcome of the sixth session. This is the first time that such a strong package of forest-related measures has been agreed on in the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) follow-up work.

The robust and unanimous consensus gives a great boost to the international arrangement on forests. Focusing on new realities and challenges, the draft resolution sets clear global objectives and adds three more principal functions to the six already contained in ECOSOC resolution 2000/35.

The UN Forum on Forests now has two immediate major tasks: we must continue working together on the development of a non-legally binding instrument on forests, and at the same time creating a substantial multi-year programme of work.

The Secretariat has already begun efforts to maintain the momentum and to provide maximum support to the Member States for an equally-successful continuation of the process. As one of several important steps, Member States have been requested to submit their proposals to the secretariat concerning the elements of a non-legally binding instrument by 30 June. This collection of countries' views will be a key source of information, and a starting point for deliberations on the non-legally binding instrument.

We look forward to action toward achieving a non-legally binding instrument on forests, toward a robust multi-year programme of work, toward sustainable forest management worldwide, and toward maintaining and developing one of the most precious resources of this planet, for forests in their own right, and for people.



*All the best,
Pekka*

LAUNCH OF ONLINE DISCUSSION BOARDS: ROOT CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION

The UN Forum on Forests Secretariat is proud to headline an upcoming series of online discussion boards concerning current forest issues. The objective is to reach out to the forest community worldwide to encourage an open exchange of ideas and explore key areas of interest. The general theme for the rest of this year will be: "The Root Causes of Deforestation." The first discussion board will launch a general debate, followed later by a more focused dialogue on emerging issues.

The discussion boards will be open for one week every other month and will be directly linked to our newsletter. Future topics will be announced, and reports and analyses of past discussions will be published in the newsletter.

We encourage you to visit our website frequently, where information on the discussion forums will be posted on a regular basis. The first online discussion board will be up and running in early May 2006 and will discuss the root causes of deforestation.

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS

At the conclusion of the sixth session, the Forum agreed to hold its seventh session from 16 to 27 April 2007, in New York. The session will consider the multi-year programme of work, a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, the multi-stakeholder dialogue, and enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination.

For more information on the seventh session, go to:
<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS 2010

The sixth session of the UN Forum on Forests decided to recommend that the UN General Assembly proclaim 2010 as the International Year of Forests. The initiative, sponsored by the Government of the Republic of Croatia, seeks to promote renewed national efforts to bring forest issues to the attention of key national actors, with the aim of working toward achieving the internationally agreed goals and targets set at global conferences.



FAO, Roberto Faidutii, #CFU000284

INTERVIEW ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS BY UNTV: "WORLD CHRONICLE"

The "World Chronicle," a UN-TV talkshow on international affairs featuring UN experts and well-known personalities, interviewed Pekka Patosaari, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, regarding the state of the world's forests. An archived webcast of the interview, which will be broadcast to English-speaking audiences in a number of countries worldwide, can be viewed here:

<http://www.un.org/webcast/WC2003a.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

For information on upcoming forest-related events, go to: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/calendar.html>.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR CONTRIBUTORS

H.E. Ambassador Judith Bahemuka
Mr. Tony Bartlett
Ms. Stephanie Caswell

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NON-LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT TIMELINE

- **UNFF6:**
Member States provided a list of draft indicative elements and other proposals for the Non-LBI.
- **By 30 June 2006:**
UNFF Secretariat to send a request to Member States who have not already done so, to provide a list of draft indicative elements and proposals.
- **By 31 July 2006:**
The secretariat to circulate a compilation of the draft indicative elements and proposals submitted by Governments.
- **By 31 August 2006:**
The secretariat to invite Member States to provide comments on the compilation circulated.
- **By 31 October 2006 (Tentative):**
The secretariat to circulate the Note by the Secretariat for the preparation of the work of the open-ended ad hoc working group, open to all Forum members, CPF members and representatives of Major Groups, to consider the content of a Non-LBI.
- **11-15 December 2006 (Tentative):**
An open-ended ad hoc working group open to all Forum members, CPF members and representatives of Major Groups, to consider the content of a NLBI.
- **16-27 April 2007 (New York):**
Seventh session of the Forum convenes to consider the Non-LBI.

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