

United Nations Forum on Forests

Informal Newsletter by the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat

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Pekka's Farewell



Pekka Patosaari

My recent retirement from the United Nations, caps five years of rich and satisfying experiences in leading the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests. After years of intense debate and negotiation, we have finally arrived at common ground. The successful adoption of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests marks a critical turning point in international forest policy. I strongly believe that this landmark agreement reflects the renewed and reenergized international commitment to promote sustainable forest management through a more holistic approach.

While the forest policy challenges that lie ahead are many, current efforts in sustainable forest management provide cause for hope. Reducing deforestation, promoting the role of forests in climate change, economic opportunities, environmental health, good governance and poverty alleviation, are all critical areas that can only benefit from holistic thinking on the linkages between people and management of our precious forest resources.

The tremendous potential of forests in combating climate change and the role of well-managed forests and wood in carbon storage and as sources of carbon-neutral, renewable energy – continues to capture political and public attention. At the same time, the highlighting the role of forest-dependant livelihoods and the contributions of good forest management practices have not garnered the same degree of focus in the current international debate on climate change.

The foundation is there, and it is up to you to make the best out of it. I leave a happy man, secure in the hope and belief that the international forest community will continue keeping the flag of forests and sustainable forest management flying high.

I thank all of you for your friendship and support to the intergovernmental process on forests, and thank all the members of the Forum Secretariat collectively, and individually. It has truly been an honor and a pleasure.

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UN General Assembly adoption of the NLBI

The General Assembly adopted the landmark agreement on international forest policy during its morning plenary session (A/RES/62/98). The adoption of the instrument was followed by a Special Event of the UN General Assembly to commemorate the adoption of the instrument, which took place at the UN General Assembly Hall from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm. The special event was convened to mark the historic occasion, and featured numerous high-level speakers, including:

- ☑ [H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim](#), President, 62nd session of the UN General Assembly
- ☑ [Mr. Sha Zukang](#), Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
- ☑ [Mr. Pekka Patosaari](#), Director, UNFF Secretariat
- ☑ [H.E. Mr. Samuel O. Outlule](#), Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN
- ☑ [H.E. Mr. Ali'ioaiga Feturi Elisaia](#), Permanent Representative of Samoa to the UN
- ☑ [H.E. Mr. Martin Roze](#), Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia
- ☑ [H.E. Ms. Ursula Heinen](#), Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Germany
- ☑ [Mr. Hans Hoogeveen](#), Director of International Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food, The Netherlands
- ☑ [Dr. Boen M. Purnama](#), Secretary General, Ministry of Forestry, Indonesia



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Preparations for the Eighth Session of the Forum (UNFF8)



2nd Meeting on the UNFF8 Bureau

The UNFF8 Bureau held its second meetings on 17 December 2007, at UN Headquarters, New York, under the chairmanship of Dr. Boen M. Purnama. The UNFF8 Bureau is now full, with the nomination of Dr. Glen Kile from the Western Europe and Other States Group (WEOG).

Bureau members considered activities and deadlines for preparations for UNFF8 including the Secretary General's Reports and the ad hoc expert group on finance, as well as the planned activities of the CPF and its members, country and region led initiatives in support of the UNFF and other related events. For more information on the UNFF8 Bureau, including [minutes of Bureau meetings](#), please refer to the UNFF website.

1st meeting of the Advisory Group on Finance for SFM

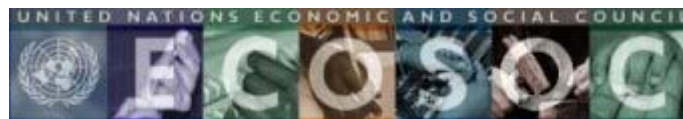
At the invitation of the Forum Secretariat, a number of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members with interest in finance for sustainable forest management gathered on 18 December 2007 at UN Headquarters, New York, to discuss preparations for this issue and the lead-up to UNFF8. Key issues discussed included the proposed Country-led Initiative (CLI) on finance, and preparations for the UNFF open ended Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on finance. Advisory Group members agreed to support the Forum Secretariat in its preparation of documents by contributing technical expertise, relevant information and experiences. The [minutes](#) of the Advisory Group meeting are available on the UNFF website.

Region-Led Initiative (RLI) on regional input to UNFF

The first-ever Region Led Initiative (RLI) in support of UNFF, co-hosted by the Governments of Australia and Switzerland, was held from 28 – 30 January 2008, in Geneva, Switzerland. Participants included forest-related regional and sub-regional organizations, several UNFF8 Bureau members, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and selected country experts. Issues discussed at the meeting included: ways to enhance the integration of UNFF topics into regional meetings; key regional priorities and challenges; ways UNFF outcomes could contribute to SFM at the regional level; and modalities for regional input to the Forum. Copies of meeting documents including the [background paper](#) and [report](#), as well as the [presentation](#) made by the UNFF Secretariat are available on the UNFF website.

Meeting between Chairpersons of Functional Commissions and ECOSOC Bureau

UNFF8 Bureau Chair, Dr. Boen M. Purnama participated in the meeting of Chairpersons of Functional Commissions and ECOSOC Bureau on 29 January 2008, at UN Headquarters, New York. The meeting is organized to enable chairpersons of all functional commissions to share experiences and expectations, towards creating a common understanding of the way forward in the UN development agenda. Dr. Purnama conveyed the Forum's strong support for close collaboration with other Functional Commissions, on areas which enhance mutual understanding of inter-related concerns. A copy of Dr. Purnama's [statement](#) is available on to the UNFF website.



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Recent Forest-related Meetings

International Conference on Combating Desertification

The State Forestry Administration of the People's Republic of China and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with the support from the UNCCD secretariat and other UN organizations, jointly organized this international conference on the global challenges of desertification and measures to combat it, from 22-24 January 2008, in Beijing, China. Participants included government representatives, UN organizations, and other international and regional institutions, as well as major groups. The DESA delegation was led by Under-Secretary-General Mr. Sha Zukang and senior representatives from the Division of Sustainable Development and the UNFF Secretariat. The outcome document, the [Beijing Statement on Combating Desertification and Promoting Sustainable Development](#), included several references on the important role of forests and the NLBI in combating and preventing desertification, land degradation as well as in rehabilitating degraded lands. A copy of the [presentation](#) made by the UNFF Secretariat is available on the UNFF website.



Forest Day in parallel with UNFCCC COP-13

This special event entitled "Shaping the Global Agenda for Forests and Climate

Change”, co-organized by CPF members including the Forum Secretariat, took place on 8 December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia. The day-long event was attended by more than 800 participants including scientists, policymakers and representatives from various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It provided a platform for dialogue on shaping the global forest agenda in the context of the critical role of forests in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The UNFF Secretariat's participation in the event included presentations on the [Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests](#) and on the [Information Needs of UNFF on forests and climate change](#).

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Upcoming Forest-related Events

February

18 – 21 February 2008 (Khartoum, Sudan)
[Near East Forestry Commission](#) - 18th Session, organized by FAO

18 – 22 February 2008 (Khartoum, Sudan)
[African Forestry and Wildlife Commission](#) - 16th Session, organized by FAO

18 – 22 February 2008 (Rome, Italy)
[Thirteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice \(SBSTTA 13\)](#)
organized by the CBD Secretariat

March

20 – 21 March 2008 (Casablanca, Morocco)
[Forests, Bioenergy and Climate Change](#), organized by IUFRO and Sylva-World for Development and the Protection of Forests and the Environment

April

8 – 12 April 2008 (Durban, South Africa)
Workshop on Forest Governance and Decentralization in Africa, a South African-Swiss Country-Led Initiative (CLI) in Support of UNFF, organized by Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Republic of South Africa and Federal Office for the Environment, Swiss Confederation

21 – 26 April 2008 (Hanoi, Viet Nam)
[Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission](#) - 22nd Session, organized by FAO

21 – 26 April 2008 (Hanoi, Viet Nam)
[Asia-Pacific Forestry Week : Forestry in a Changing World](#), organized by FAO

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UNFF Staff Update

We recently bid farewell to Mr. Pekka Patosaari who retired from the UN on 31 December 2007 following a long distinguished career in international forestry. Mr. Patosaari joined the UN as Head of the Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests in 2002. Prior to the UN, Mr. Patosaari worked on forest issues in numerous capacities including as Director of State Forestry and Forestry Research in the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Chief Coordinator of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of the Forests in Europe (MCPFE, Helsinki Process). He will be greatly missed and we wish him all the best in his retirement and future endeavors.

Following the retirement of Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Mr. Sha Zukang designated Mr. Peter Csoka, as Officer-in-Charge of the UNFF Secretariat effective 1 January 2008.

We would like to extend our most sincere apologies for not including our farewell to Mr. Jorge Illueca in our last newsletter. Mr. Illueca retired from the UN in September 2007 following a distinguished professional and academic career in environmental research and policy. Mr. Illueca joined the UNFF Secretariat on a secondment from UNEP in 2002. Prior to 2002, Mr. Illueca had served as Assistant Executive Director at the Division of Environmental Conventions in UNEP. We wish him all the best in his retirement and future endeavors.

Further related to staff matters at the UNFF Secretariat, the vacancy announcement for the position of Director of the UNFF Secretariat (D-2) was issued on the [UN website](#) on 18 Jan 2008. The deadline for applications is 18 March 2008. For more information on application procedures, please refer to the [vacancy announcement](#).

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Information Requests

Help us compile information on Forest Ministers

We are currently in the process of updating our information databases in an effort to improve our communication activities in the lead up to UNFF8. In the process, we have discovered that the contact information we presently have on Ministers responsible for forests is incomplete and out of date. To that regard, we would like to request all member States for their assistance in providing us with the necessary contact information at your earliest convenience.

Update your National Focal Points Information

We would like to invite all member States to review the national focal point name and contact information currently listed on our website to ensure that the information is correct and up to date. Please send any corrections to the UNFF Secretariat [via email](#).

New nominations of national focal points should be sent in hard copy through mail or fax (+1 917 367 3186). Please [contact us](#) if you require templates of nomination letters or copies of past communications regarding this matter.

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