



UNITED NATIONS

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat**

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**Pekka Patosaari
Director**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Executive Director, Mr. Manoel Sobral,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, allow me to express my personal apology for not being able to attend and address this Council session in person, due to tremendous time and work pressure on the follow-up activities to the outcome of the sixth session of the UN Forum on Forests. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your understanding and assure you and the distinguished delegates that we greatly appreciate the support ITTO has been providing to the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat through its continued staff secondment and other inputs.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, I would like to share with you the recent developments at the UN Forum on Forests that are most relevant to the forest community. But before doing so, I would like to congratulate the Council and member countries for the successful conclusion of the new International Tropical Timber Agreement last January. This is a true manifestation of international cooperation for the sustainable management of tropical forests. It can be said that Year 2006 will be recognized in history as a milestone year for the international forest policy community, with the successful conclusion of the new ITTA, and the adoption of a set of far-reaching decisions on the international arrangement on forests at the sixth session of United Nations Forum on Forests.

The Forum, in February this year, agreed upon a resolution which was then adopted by its parent body - the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) later in July. This resolution further strengthened the international arrangement on forests. It provided a sharper focus on UN Forum on Forests' work by setting four clear Global Objectives on Forests, broadened the scope of the arrangement with additional functions and decided to develop a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

In addition, the sixth session recommended that the General Assembly of the United Nations would proclaim year 2011 as the International Year of Forests. In this regard, Croatia has kindly put forward a proposal, and the current 61st Session of the General Assembly is expected to adopt this resolution. The commemoration of forests at such a high level will be extremely significant for forests and the forestry community of the world.

The UN Forum on Forests has also made a number of recommendations regarding the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. It particularly addressed “means of implementation”, such as funding mechanisms, to facilitate action on the ground for sustainable forest management (SFM). Specific recommendations included the recognition of the Bali Partnership Fund as among the important funding sources for SFM. In this respect, this Council, as the governing body of the Bali Partnership Fund, has been invited to facilitate access to the Fund by countries for SFM and the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests. I would like to urge the Council to positively consider this invitation of the Forum. The Council may also wish to positively respond to the call for integrated and mutually supportive forest-related programmes among the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

Mr. Chairman,

The Forum’s decision to adopt a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI) at the seventh session of the Forum next year is clearly a giant leap forward for the international forest community. To facilitate the preparation of the “instrument,” an open-ended ad hoc expert group will be convened from 11-15 December this year in New York. The Secretariat has compiled the proposals and comments submitted by member States and other groups on the possible content of this “instrument”. Based on those inputs, the Secretariat has prepared an official document and a draft composite text of an “instrument” for consideration by the experts at the meeting next month. These documents on the “instrument” also are also available on our website.

Mr. Chairman,

UNFF will hold its seventh session from 16 to 27 April next year in New York. The main items on the agenda include adoption of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, adoption of the multi-year programme of work, discussion on enhanced cooperation and coordination, and a multi-stakeholder dialogue.

I would like to inform the Council that in early next year, from 13 to 16 February, a country-led initiative in support of UNFF, titled “*Multi-year programme of work of the UN Forum on Forests: Charting the way forward to 2015*” is being organized in Bali, Indonesia. Led by the Government of Indonesia, this initiative is co-sponsored by the Governments of Germany and the Netherlands. This initiative will primarily focus on the development of the multi-year programme of work of UNFF. Undoubtedly, this meeting of experts from all over the world will be extremely helpful in clarifying issues and ideas, and facilitating the work of the Forum during the seventh session.

Mr. Chairman, a successful conclusion of the crucial negotiations at the seventh session on the non-legally binding instrument and multi-year programme of work would undoubtedly have far-reaching influence on international cooperation on forests and in implementing action toward sustainable forest management. Therefore, I appeal to all delegates of the Council to contribute to these important decisions.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat’s assurance to work closely with ITTO and other international forest-related organizations, partnerships and processes for the benefits of forests and society as a whole.

I wish you success at this session of the Council.

And, I thank you again for the opportunity to address the Council.