



## **Regional-Global Cooperation and Information Exchange on UNFF-related Meetings**

### **MCPFE Expert Level Meeting**

Statement by the UNFF Secretariat

Oslo, Norway

8 May 2008

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Thank you Mr. Chair and good afternoon to all colleagues:

Let me begin by congratulating the Liaison Unit Oslo on the organization of this meeting in follow-up to the commitments of the Warsaw Conference. The Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) attaches great importance to the past two day discussions, and thanks you for the opportunity to inform this Expert Meeting of relevant aspects in preparation for the Forum's upcoming Eighth Session (UNFF 8), in 2009.

In particular, I wish to focus on upcoming international meetings, which will be relevant to deliberations at UNFF 8, specifically on the issue of financing for sustainable forest management. In preparation for UNFF 8, the Secretariat invited members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) with robust experience and expertise in forest finance to form an Advisory Group on Finance. Its main focus is to help develop proposals for a voluntary global financing mechanism/ portfolio approach/ forest financing framework and to support preparations for the Forum's open-ended Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG) meeting to be held later this year.

The Advisory Group plans to conduct an analysis reviewing the existing and potential/ evolving funding mechanisms (e.g., in the UNFCCC negotiations) to address the provisions of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on all Types of Forests. The preliminary findings of this analysis (so-called "mapping exercise") may be presented to the Country-Led Initiative "International Dialogue on Financing Sustainable Forest Management", to be held from 8-12 September, in Paramaribo, Suriname, for feedback and further input from experts participating in that meeting.

In addition to working on substantive aspects of the AHEG, the Secretariat has also been exploring various options for the dates, venue and working modality for the meeting. Based on this, the UNFF 8 Bureau, at its most recent meeting, decided to hold the AHEG meeting in Vienna, Austria from 3 to 7 November 2008. The Secretariat will make necessary arrangements to inform all UNFF parties of this decision.

In preparation for the Forum's Eighth Session, the Secretariat has also been working on the documentation for the three themes under "Forests in a Changing Environment". Building on the close cooperation with the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions, and other CPF members, the Forum Secretariat has begun to carry out background analyses on all three themes to help inform the UNFF 8 Secretary-General Reports.

As part of our information-gathering activities for the Reports of the Secretary-General on forests and desertification and land degradation, forests and biodiversity, and forests and climate change, we are also hosting a series of three web-forums to enable open discussion and inputs on these issues. The first in this

series, namely, the UNFF web-forum on “Reversing the loss of forest cover, preventing forest degradation in all types of forests and combating desertification, including in low forest cover countries” was launched this Monday, and will remain active until 30 May 2008. The next web-forum, in June, will feature “Forests and Biodiversity Conservation, including Protected Areas”, and then in July, “Forests and Climate Change”. We hope that all stakeholders will take advantage of this opportunity to voice their opinions and share their valuable experiences on the themes. Links to the web forums can be found on the UNFF website.

Moving on to developments in support of the Forum’s work, I wish to mention two Initiatives which took place earlier this year. First, the Region-Led Initiative in support of UNFF, which was held in Geneva, in January 2008. This meeting helped distill a rich blend of views on regional priorities and challenges related to SFM, as well as opinions on how to further integrate Forum topics into regional discussions, and modalities for regional inputs to the Forum. For your reference, the report of this meeting is available on the UNFF website.

The second initiative held last month in Durban, South Africa was the Country-Led Initiative on Forest Governance and Decentralization in Africa. This meeting focused on experiences and lessons learned on broader governance reforms in the forest sector in Africa. The final report of this meeting will soon be available on the UNFF website.

In the recent months, additional meetings and events have been convened by Member States, CPF members and our other institutional partners on issues that are directly relevant to the UNFF agenda. CPF members met for a strategic dialogue and instituted two processes related to climate change: an expert panel on adaptation, as well as an inter-agency response to the broader issue of forests and climate change; CBD SBSTTA 13 reviewed the convention’s forest biodiversity work program; and three regional Forestry Commissions held their annual meetings. Several of these meetings, including the Beijing International Conference on Combating Desertification co-hosted by DESA and the Government of China in January 2008, also reaffirmed closer interaction to the Forum’s work.

In addition, an Expert Meeting on international cooperation in preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products was held in Jakarta, Indonesia in March 2008. Through resolution 16/1, the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) called for strengthened collaboration with the UNFF. Each of these meetings provided an excellent opportunity for the Secretariat to exchange information and raise awareness on the various avenues for input to the Forum.

In closing, I would like to add a point on continued collaboration and interaction with the MCPFE, particularly related to the submission of regional inputs to the Forum for its Eighth Session. To facilitate inputs, the Secretariat has prepared an Information Note which highlights aspects to consider, related to the thematic focus on “Forests in a Changing Environment” and “Means of Implementation for Sustainable Forest Management”. We encourage you to review this Note, and to consider referring to it, when preparing your input.

It is our belief that regional cooperation and information exchange is an increasingly significant part of the Forum’s work, which will help build cooperation, share knowledge, voice concerns, and engage in dialogue on critical issues, with a view to strengthening regional and global partnerships.

Thank you for your attention.