United Nations Forum on Forests
Fourth session
Geneva, 3 - 14 May - 2004
Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda *
Common items for each session: multi-stakeholder dialogue

Multi-stakeholder dialogue
Note by the Secretary-General

Summary
The present note has been prepared to facilitate the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue at the fourth session of the Forum. It describes the approach taken by the Secretariat to enhance the effectiveness of the dialogue and the efforts major groups have made to ensure the relevance and value of their input to the UNFF process. This year’s dialogue will be conducted in two parts consisting of a (1) plenary session and (2) two parallel group sessions. The discussion papers prepared by the major groups are presented as addenda to this Note.

* E/CN.18/2004/1.
1. In response to resolution 1/1 of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Forum holds a multi-stakeholder dialogue at each of its sessions. Agenda 21 identified broad based public participation in decision making as a “fundamental pre-requisite for the achievement of sustainable development” and defined nine major groups. Accordingly, the UNFF stresses the importance of involving major groups in the work of the Forum and the value of inputs from major groups associated with forest management at the national, regional and global levels. Practical experience with promoting the Forest Principles and implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action provides stakeholders a unique perspective on progress, emerging issues, and obstacles that remain to sustainable forest management.

2. In order to facilitate consultation with the substantial number of stakeholders affected by and with interests in international forest policy, the Secretariat works with major group Focal Points for UNFF to ensure effective outreach to stakeholder networks. Focal points are identified through consultations within each major group. They are charged with keeping major group organizations informed of progress in the preparations for UNFF sessions. They are also responsible for overseeing the preparation of their respective discussion papers addressing the agenda items before the Forum, and ensuring that all interested major group organizations have the opportunity to contribute.

3. The fourth session of the Forum will dedicated two meeting for the dialogue. The secretariat of the Forum has held regular consultations with the focal points of the major groups to plan the dialogue as well as formulate its objectives and format. Based on such consultations, the dialogue at the fourth session would be held in two parts. The first part of the dialogue will be held in plenary to provide an opportunity for discussion on the specific concerns of major groups with member states and other participants. The second half of the dialogue will be conducted in a working group format with two parallel groups, facilitated by panel discussions. The groups will focus on two cross-cutting topics relevant to the themes of the fourth session. It is anticipated that this new format will make this year’s MSD more conducive to an interactive, interesting and engaging dialogue between the representatives of the major groups, governments and other organizations. Facilitated panel discussions would cover issues like “Capacity Building” and “Partnerships” as they relate to the themes of the fourth session.

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1. Agenda 21 identified the following nine major groups of stakeholders: (1) women; (2) children and youth; (3) indigenous people; (4) non-governmental organizations; (5) local authorities; (6) workers and trade unions; (7) business and industry; (8) scientific and technological community; and (9) farmers.

2. Business and Industry (International Council of Forest Product Associations, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Inter-African Forest Industries), Forest Landowners (Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF) or the Confederation of European Forest Owners), Indigenous Peoples (Asociacion Kunas Unidos por Nabguana), forest related NGOs (Friends of Siberian Forests), Scientific and Technological Communities (International Council for Science), Workers and Trade Unions (International Federation of Building and Wood Workers), Women (Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement, Green Earth Organization), Youth and Children (Initiatives-Jeunes, Global Youth Network, International Forest Students Association). Full contact information for these UNFF major group focal points can be found at http://www.un.org/esa/forests/contacts-major_groups.html
4. The discussion papers from the major groups that are issued as addenda to the present note will address, *inter alia*, the progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the thematic elements\(^3\) under discussion at the fourth session of the Forum, in particular as they relate to initiatives taken by organizations within their stakeholder group. These papers also highlight major groups’ experiences with impacts of IPF/IFF proposals for action on their particular areas of concern and include suggestions on how to move forward.

\(^3\) The thematic elements for the fourth session of UNFF are (1) traditional-forest related knowledge; (2) forest-related scientific knowledge; (3) social and cultural aspects; (4) monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions; and (5) criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.