

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General  
5 February 2007

Original: English

**United Nations Forum on Forests****Seventh Session**

New York, 16-27 April 2007

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

Multi-stakeholder dialogue

**Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The participation of representatives of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, during the thematic sessions of the last multi-year programme of work of the Forum (200-2005) was enhanced significantly over time. In order to build on this progress, the Forum may wish to consider a number of measures including: promoting the development of associations and networks at the national, regional and international levels; continuing the practice of involving stakeholders in expert meetings of the Forum in an open and participatory manner; re-considering the modalities of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue so as to mainstream the Dialogue into the discussions of the session; and promote and support Organization-Led Initiatives as part of the future multi-year programme of work of the Forum.

This year, the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue will take place over the course of the two week session. There will be a one and one-half hour session during the first week and a morning session during the second week during which major group representatives will present their Discussion Papers and share their perspectives on the negotiation of a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests as well as the future multi-year programme of work of the Forum.

## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>I.</b> Introduction.....	1 – 5	
<b>II.</b> Enhancing Stakeholder Participation in the future work of the Forum.....	5 – 10	
<b>III.</b> The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at the seventh session of the Forum (UNFF7).	11	
<b>IV.</b> Points for discussion.....	12	

Advance Unedited Version

## I. Introduction

1. The present Note has been prepared to facilitate the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the seventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). Discussion papers prepared by the major groups are contained in addenda to the present note. Discussion Papers were prepared by major group focal points in consultation with their networks.

2. Between the years 2000 and 2005, the Forum made significant advancements in enhancing the contribution of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, to its work. Thematic sessions provided an opportunity to learn from experience of major group representatives in the field and participation of major groups representatives both in the official sessions as well as in the Ad Hoc Expert Group meetings and country-led initiatives increased significantly. Building on this progress and providing more meaningful opportunities for engagement of stakeholders in the work of the Forum in the future will be an important issue for consideration in the new multi-year programme of work of the Forum, to be adopted at the seventh session. The present note seeks to provide some recommendations on how this can be accomplished.

3. Pursuant to its resolution 1/1, the Forum holds a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) as a common element of every session. The Forum secretariat facilitates consultations with the focal points of each major group<sup>1</sup> to plan and prepare for the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. The Forum secretariat has worked closely with major group focal points to

---

<sup>1</sup> A complete list of major group focal points is available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/forests/contacts-major\\_groups.html](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/contacts-major_groups.html)

enhance participation in accordance with Forum resolution 1/1 as well as the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The format and content of the MSD is proposed by the major group focal points, in consultation with the Forum secretariat, to the Bureau of the Forum for consideration.

4. In addition, United Nations Forum on Forests resolution 1/1 states that the transparent and participatory practices established by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should provide the basis for major group participation in the Forum. Taking into account the development of stakeholder participation in the CSD as well as the decisions taken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Forum may wish to consider ways to enhance direct and substantive involvement of international organizations and major groups in its work.

## **II. Enhancing Stakeholder Participation in the future work of the Forum**

5. In order for major group representatives to work effectively with an inter-governmental process that is restricted by both financial resources and time, groups must be able to organize associations and networks. Such networks serve a dual purpose of promoting capacity building and exchange of experiences among members as well as developing a group perspective based on common concerns which can then be transmitted to the Forum. While some major groups currently benefit from the existence of such networks, there is considerable room for improvement. For example, the primary constraint

in engaging the Local Authorities major group is this lack of appropriate networks that could contribute on behalf of a range of members. Member States may wish to consider promoting and supporting the development of such networks at the national, regional and international levels.

6. Major group representatives have contributed significantly to the work of the Ad Hoc Expert Groups convened as part of the Forum's multi-year programme of work from 2000 – 2005. Their proposals and comments on the various issues under consideration were submitted to the discussions in an open and participatory manner alongside other experts. Such a practice should be continued in the future work including during the intersessional activities of the Forum, such as proposed Intergovernmental Expert Group meetings, for the consideration of the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

7. In addition, the positive experience gained from such expert group meetings could be used in reconsidering the modalities of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue in future sessions. Both member States and major group representatives have expressed their concerns regarding what is currently considered a static method of participation. Such Dialogues could be used more effectively in incorporating the views and priorities of stakeholders into the discussions of the Forum itself. Allowing stakeholders to participate in an open and participatory manner throughout the session may be one way of mainstreaming the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue throughout the session.

8. One example of how such enhanced participation may be drawn from the lessons learned by the General Assembly through the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities . In order to ensure that decisions taken in the context of the Convention would reflect the needs and concerns of the stakeholders that would be affected by it, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to invite representatives of civil society organizations to participate in the work of the Committee as experts and called upon such experts throughout the negotiation when such expert advice or opinion was warranted. The Forum could also consider inviting representatives of major groups to participate in the work of the Forum as experts throughout each of its future sessions.

9. Major groups have convened several very successful Organization-Led Initiatives in the past years to contribute substantively to discussions on such issues as the root causes of deforestation, traditional forest-related knowledge and gender aspects of sustainable forest management. Such initiatives provided the opportunity to consider in-depth analyses, positive experiences as well as obstacles faced in implementing the decisions taken by the Forum. Major groups should be encouraged to continue this practice in the future. Specific reference to organization-led initiatives of interest to the work of the Forum could also be incorporated into the formal multi-year programme of work, as is done in some regional inter-governmental processes such as the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe.

### **III. The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at the seventh session of the Forum**

**(UNFF7)**

10. The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at the seventh session of the Forum will be spread over the course of the two week session. It will begin with a one and one-half hour session during the first week which will provide major group representatives the opportunity to present the findings presented in their Discussion Papers and present their preliminary views on the non-legally binding instrument and the multi-year programme of work. Another three hour session will be provided during the second week of the session during which representatives will be invited to discuss with member States the progress of the negotiations. Major group representatives will also be invited to present their views and comments throughout the negotiations at the discretion of the Chair and presiding vice-Chairs.

### **IV. Points for discussion**

11. In considering the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests as well as the multi-year programme of work for the Forum, member States may wish to:

- ♦ **consider promoting and supporting the development of networks and associations that of major groups, as identified in Agenda 21;**

- ♦ **consider continuing the practice of involving stakeholders in Ad Hoc Expert Groups in an open and participatory manner during the future work of the Forum and consider using the same practice in the proposed Intergovernmental Expert Group meetings which will serve to evaluate implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests;**
- ♦ **re-evaluate the modalities of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and consider ways of mainstreaming the Dialogue into discussion at future sessions of the Forum, taking into account lessons learned by other fora; and**
- ♦ **consider the inclusion of Organization-Led Initiatives of interest into the planned multi-year programme of work of the Forum.**

Advance Unedited Version