

Statement by the Major Group Children and Youth
MSD 18 April 2007

Thank you mister chairman for giving Children and Youth the opportunity to comment on the NLBI and the MYPOW.

Our group has been actively involved in this Forum since its inception, and we are proud that our past efforts have led to a greater emphasis on the importance of education and capacity building.

We are pleased to note that a number of our concerns are expressed in some particular sections of the current proposal for the NLBI. However, for a holistic agreement, further priorities need to be included.

A very pertinent issue is the strong relationship between Sustainable Forest Management and inter-generational equity. To adequately meet the needs of future generations and therefore achieve sustainability, we strongly emphasize the need for the Forum to actively involve youth and children in the development and implementation of SFM. They are tomorrow's forest dependent generation.

Only by the means of proper education, people will develop awareness about the use of resources and learn how to make sustainable decisions. Therefore, we urge that the Forum include criteria and indicators to evaluate educational outcomes within the National Forest Programme of each member state.

To enable us to continue the dialogue on the regional level, we encourage the increasing support for the involvement of Major Groups. This requires strong leadership and action from members of the international community. In this regard, Youth and Children acknowledge the Government of Australia that proactively supports members of our group to attend UNFF sessions. Each country can take action to increase education and capacity building by concrete steps like these.

We welcome the sentiment expressed by Switzerland and the US regarding greater involvement of the Major Groups in the Forum. We are happy to discuss this further with all of you.

Finally, we would like to bring up a very practical concern. We all agree that SFM resulting from this forum can only be a success when it is the outcome of a discussion among all stakeholders. It is unfortunate to note that some Major Group and government delegates face difficulties in obtaining Visas to attend the Forum.

Mr. Chairman, our group is pleased with the current language in both the NLBI and the MYPOW, but, we feel that for credible implementation, criteria and indicators reflecting education as well as capacity building should be strongly emphasized.

We hope you enjoyed our Major Group singing for you yesterday and that this encourages you even more to make all efforts to go home with an agreement that will save the worlds' forests. The children of today deserve a future. This future needs forests.