

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Ninth Session (UNFF9 Bureau)**

Minutes of the first meeting

Monday-Tuesday, 24-25 August 2009
UN Forum on Forests Secretariat
One UN Plaza, DC 1 – 1235, New York

Participation

Bureau members: Mr. Arvids Ozols, Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl, Mr. Raymond Harold Landveld and Mr. Zainol Rahim Zainuddin. Mr. Ndiawar Dieng was represented by Mr. M. Mame Baba Cisse from the Permanent Mission of Senegal in New York.

UNFF Secretariat: Ms. Jan McAlpine, Mr. Mahendra Joshi, Mr. Peter Csoka, Ms. Mita Sen and Ms. Catalina Santamaria.

Secretary of the Forum: Ms. Vivian Pliner.

Others: Ms. Zalwani Zalkaply (Permanent Mission of Malaysia) and Mr. Zigmars Zilgalvis (Permanent Mission of Latvia).

The agenda of the first meeting of the Bureau was the following:

1. General introduction
2. Organization of the Bureau
3. General review of UNFF8 outcome and the ECOSOC decision
4. Meeting with the Co-Facilitators on the advancement of negotiations on Means of Implementation
5. Preparations of the Ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests
6. Future meetings of the Bureau
7. Other matters

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda

Ms. Jan McAlpine, Director of the Secretariat, opened the meeting at 10:00 am on 24 August and welcomed the members of the UNFF9 Bureau. She informed members that Mr. Ndiawar Dieng could not attend the meeting due to visa complications.

After the general introduction of Bureau members and participating staff members, Ms. McAlpine highlighted the past practice and working modality of the Bureau, its interaction with the Secretariat and the members of the Forum.

2. Organization of the Bureau

The Forum would formally elect the Chairman only on the opening day of the Ninth session on 24 January 2011. However, to guide the functioning of the Bureau until the formal election is held, the Bureau members re-affirmed their support to nominate Mr. Ozols as the Chairman,

maintaining the practice to rotate chairmanship among the five geographic regions. Mr. Ozols thanked the Bureau members for their trust in him and chaired the meeting.

The Bureau was informed that the Co-Facilitators (ref. Agenda item 4) would be meeting separately with Groups and Member States on 25 August. Therefore, it decided to consider this agenda item on the second day (25 August) in the afternoon only.

3. General review of UNFF8 outcome and the ECOSOC decision

The Bureau considered the outcome of the UNFF8 and its outstanding issue of Means on Implementation. It expressed satisfaction with the follow-up actions, in particular, the informal consultations facilitated by Mr. Zainuddin in July that led to the adoption of the UNFF8 report by ECOSOC and a separate decision authorizing informal consultations to conclude the negotiations on MOI and convening a special session of UNFF9, if an agreement were reached through the informal consultations. The Bureau expressed its appreciation to the leadership shown by Mr. Ozols and facilitation by Mr. Zainuddin. It also acknowledged the appointment of two former chairmen, Mr. Boen Purnama and Mr. Hans Hoogeveen (UNFF8 and UNFF7 Chairs) as the Co-Facilitators for the informal consultations.

The Bureau members noted that the main priority ahead was to conclude the negotiations on MOI in 2009. It further noted the importance of UNFF8 resolution 8/1 on “Forests in a Changing Environment” that gives a strong mandate to work on key environmental issues and their links with forests. The Bureau noted that more needs to be done in informing the outside world about relevant developments in the area of forests and suggested to consider organization of special information or briefing sessions under the UNFF. The Director noted that when considering this issue attention should be paid to the need for generating necessary resources.

4. Meeting with the Co-Facilitators on the advancement of negotiations on the Means of Implementation (held on 25 August 2009 at 3:30 pm)

The Bureau met with the Co-Facilitators in the afternoon of 25 August (during the second day of the Bureau meeting) and was briefed by Co-Facilitators, Mr. Purnama and Mr. Hoogeveen on their assessment of the situation and plans to proceed. The Co-Facilitators explained that they would continue informal exchange of views with delegates in the next two days and would hold an informal consultation with all delegations on Thursday, 27 August in New York. According to the Co-Facilitators, the delegations, with whom they have consulted, have expressed their willingness to engage constructively and conclude the negotiations in expeditious manner. The Bureau thanked the Co-Facilitators for their commitment and assured them of the full support of the Bureau in their work.

5. Preparations of the Ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests

The Secretariat presented an overview of preparatory activities required for the successful organization of UNFF9, based on its agenda. These included a number of events, official documents, logistic issues and financial resources needed. The UNFF9 session includes a ministerial high-level segment and launching of the International Year of Forests.

Noting the significance and time constraints related to the preparatory activities for addressing the UNFF9 agenda, the Bureau underscored the importance of successful conclusion of the negotiations on Mean of Implementation in 2009.

In order to help UNFF9 to exploit its full potential the Bureau decided on an internal brainstorming exercise to develop recommendations on the following subjects and invited the Secretariat to contribute to the exercise:

- *consolidating documents to key thematic issues*
- *scheduling of High-level Segment (HLS)*
- *ideas on the International Year of Forests (IYF) activities*
- *intersessional activities of UNFF*

After initial exchange of views the Bureau decided to consider these issues through correspondence and conclude on them at its next meeting. It also requested the Secretariat to develop a comprehensive roadmap including relevant intersessional activities, for the Bureau's consideration at its next meeting.

The Bureau decided to continue the common practice of major group involvement in the Forum's work, and to further explore ways to enhance the interest and participation of all stakeholder groups.

6. Future meetings of the Bureau

The Bureau considered the number of meetings in the future and suggested to plan tentatively one meeting in 2009 depending on the successful conclusion of informal consultations on MOI leading to a special session, three meetings in 2010 and one in 2011. The Bureau was of the view that bureau meetings should be based on the need, and preferably organized in conjunction with related meetings to streamline travelling burden of the members. In this respect, the proposed roadmap indicating all major activities and a timeline would help the Bureau's decision. Accordingly, the dates were left open at the moment, and the Secretariat would plan to communicate with members to finalize the date of the next meeting. The Secretariat explained the provision of travel support to Bureau members from developing countries and countries with economies in transition attending the Bureau meetings, which required to have dedicated contributions from donors to the UNFF trust fund.

7. Other matters

The Bureau discussed other matters of interest, including:

- 7.1. Fund raising for the UNFF Trust Fund
- 7.2. "Forest Day 3" at the UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen
- 7.3. CPF activities in support of UNFF
- 7.4. Planned Country-led Initiatives (CLIs) in support of UNFF

The Secretariat briefed on the background of the Secretariat's budgetary arrangement and the status and use of the Trust Fund, and appealed to the Bureau for fundraising. It also informed the Bureau of donor commitments approximately \$2 million so far this year to the UNFF Trust Fund for new focused substantive activities to support Member States. However, dedicated donor

contributions to trust fund are also crucial in organizing successful Bureau meeting as a number of Bureau members need travel support to attend those meetings. The Bureau noted the need for additional funding for the successful preparations of the UNFF9 session and other relevant meetings, and assured to approach donors for their contributions.

The Bureau welcomed the planned “Forest Day 3” at the UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, and encouraging the UNFF Secretariat’s active participation in it. It also expressed its appreciation to the information regarding the on-going joint-activities by CPF members in support of the UNFF.

The Bureau welcomed the planned CLI in China on 17-20 November 2009 on “Forests for people: the role of national forest programmes and the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests” and another in Mexico in 2010. Underscoring the significance of the CLIs in the work of the Forum, the Bureau also expressed its appreciation to governments which indicated their plans of organizing other CLIs in the near future.

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Ozols thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting. He then adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm of 25 August 2009.