

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Eighth Session (UNFF8 Bureau)**

Minutes of the first meeting

Thursday, 6 September 2007
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
UN Forum on Forests Secretariat
One UN Plaza, DC 1 – 1235, New York

Participation

Bureau members: Dr. Boen M. Purnama, Mr. Arvids Ozols and Mr. Abdellah Benmellouk, and Mr. Modesto Fernandez Diaz-Silveira via tele-conference.

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Mr. Mahendra Joshi, Mr. Peter Csoka, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Afsa Kemitale and Ms. Catalina Santamaria.

Secretary of the Forum: Ms. Vivian Pliner.

Others: Mr. Tri Tharyat, Indonesian Mission.

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

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda
2. Organization of the Bureau
- 2.bis. Travel support to Bureau members for participation
3. General review of UNFF7 and ECOSOC action
4. Information about the dialogue between the Chairpersons of the functional commissions and the ECOSOC on 10 July 2007
5. Relevant policy issues and scheduling the preparations of the Eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests
6. Future meetings of the Bureau
7. Other matters

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda

Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Director of the Secretariat, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the UNFF8 Bureau. He informed members that Mr. Modesto Fernandez Diaz would be participating in the meeting through a telephone link and that the fifth Bureau member representing the Western Europe and Other States Group (WEOG) is still to be nominated by the Group. After the general introduction of Bureau members and participating staff members, Mr. Patosaari highlighted the past practice and working modality of the Bureau, its interaction with the Secretariat and the members of the Forum.

Upon his proposal, the agenda of the meeting was adopted with one addition to the provisional agenda circulated by the Secretariat in advance, as “2 bis. Travel support to Bureau members for participation”.

2. Organization of the Bureau

As the Forum will formally elect the Chairman only on the opening day of the Eighth session, April 2009, in New York, Mr. Patosaari advised the Bureau to consider nominating a Chairman from among the members to guide the deliberations of the Bureau until the formal election is held.

The Bureau members unanimously nominated Mr. Boen M. Purnama (Indonesia) to act as the Chair of the UNFF8 Bureau. Mr. Purnama accepted the invitation to chair the Bureau and thanked the Bureau members for their trust in him. He then chaired the rest of the meeting. He agreed that a representative of WEOG is essential for the smooth functioning of the Bureau and accordingly, he would send a letter to the Chairman of the WEOG for September 2007 (the Permanent Representative of Switzerland) urging for the group's nomination to the Bureau as early as possible.

2 bis. Support of Bureau members and participation of members

This agenda item was added to address the difficulty encountered by Bureau members from developing countries, who were based in capitals, to participate at the Bureau meetings, due to the lack of resources to finance their travel. The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the previous and common practice that the member States nominating their regional representatives to the Bureau were expected to cover the costs involved. The Secretariat also reminded that it has neither the legislative mandate nor the budget provision to provide travel support to the Bureau members. However, the Secretariat drew attention to ECOSOC Resolution 2005/5, adopted in 2005 in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), enabling the CSD Secretariat to provide financial support to one meeting of the CSD Bureau held outside of New York, and certain related regional meetings, through designated extra-budgetary contributions to the Trust Fund.

Acknowledging the importance of active participation of all Bureau members as well as the current constraints, the Bureau would explore appropriate solution(s). It would see if a draft resolution could be introduced to and adopted by ECOSOC for UNFF, similar to 2005/5, at the upcoming resumed session. Consideration of such a resolution would be separate to the consideration of the UNFF7 report.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would assist the Bureau members in the process of preparing a draft resolution. In addition, the Bureau wished that the Secretariat would further explore possible other means to support the participation of Bureau members from developing countries to future Bureau meetings.

3. General review of UNFF7 and ECOSOC action

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the decision of ECOSOC in July to defer the consideration of the UNFF7 report to the resumed session of the Council later this year. It informed the Bureau that the ECOSOC Bureau is planning to conduct informal consultations on the UNFF7 report prior to the next possible resumed session, tentatively planned for 17 September. The Secretariat also briefed the Bureau of the Secretariat's current situation, including limited staff resources and the lack of secondments from partner organizations.

The Bureau members agreed that the main priority ahead was the adoption of the report of UNFF7 and its programme budget implications (PBI). The Bureau agreed to recommend Mr. Hans Hoogeveen, UNFF7 Bureau Chair, to the ECOSOC Bureau for facilitating the informal consultations. The UNFF Secretary informed the Bureau that the ECOSOC Presidency would establish the informal consultation process, most likely on the week of 10 September.

4. Information about the dialogue between the chairpersons of the functional commissions and ECOSOC on 10 July 2007

On behalf of the UNFF Bureau, Mr. Purnama had participated in the dialogue between the chairpersons of the functional commissions of ECOSOC, and in the meeting with the ECOSOC Bureau on 10 July 2007 in Geneva, Switzerland. Mr. Purnama highlighted the process and outcomes of those events. The dialogue was structured around the two core issues within the UN Development Agenda, which were the thematic focus of this session of the Council: 1. "Eradication of poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development", and 2. "The role of the UN system in promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all". He opined that the meeting helped raise the profile of the UNFF and brought further attention to the progress made by the Forum, particularly the adoption of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests; the process to develop and adopt a global forest financing mechanism; and the new activities contained in the MYPOW (2007-2015). He pointed to the benefits of using this opportunity in the future to broaden the UNFF profile, and to illustrate the explicit linkages between the work of the UNFF and the Council, as well as to describe how UNFF could further contribute to system-wide coherence on development issues.

The Bureau agreed that UNFF could explore possible ways to submit inputs to ECOSOC and influence policy development on relevant areas, in particular, in terms of emerging issues.

5. Relevant policy issues and scheduling the preparations of the Eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau members of its analysis on the UNFF7 outcome and corresponding main activities from now until the Eighth session. The overview of the activities included a broad vision of preparatory activities required for the successful organization of UNFF8 and the AHEG meeting on finance. Approximately 32 documents are anticipated for those two meetings. The Secretariat highlighted the priority areas of preparations, in particular, the preparations for the AHEG on finance, and activities required in monitoring, assessment and reporting for UNFF8, as well as approaches for enhancing interagency collaboration, strengthening the regional aspects of the international arrangement on forests, and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues. The Bureau was also informed of the country-led initiatives in support of UNFF8, which included one previously announced meeting and some others that were being considered by interested governments. The Secretariat envisaged learning soon about those meetings.

The Bureau exchanged views on the key activities, such as official documentation, the AHEG, CLI and other meetings, and gave suggestions to the Secretariat in further developing a comprehensive roadmap for the Bureau to consider at its next meeting.

Noting the significance and time constraints related to the preparatory activities for addressing the Means of Implementation (MOI), the Bureau underlined the importance of exploring options for scheduling the AHEG-Finance meeting as early as feasible, possibly closer to mid-2008. It also invited the Secretariat to consult with the sponsors of the proposed Country-led Initiative on Finance to schedule a better sequencing of the two related meetings. Given the official nature of the AHEG meeting, it was noted that convening the CLI before the AHEG meeting would be advisable.

On the issue of the major groups' participation, the Bureau noted that active and full participation by major groups in UNFF would remain a key element for success. The Bureau agreed 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 advised the Secretariat to develop a roadmap indicating all major activities and a timeline, which would help the Bureau members to determine when and how many meetings should be scheduled in the future. 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, taking into consideration the two-months advance notice needed for some members. It was also anticipated that the member from WEOG would be on board by that time.

7. Other matters

The Bureau discussed other matters of interest, including fundraising for the UNFF Trust Fund. 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. The Bureau noted the need for additional funding for the successful preparations of the AHEG and UNFF8 meetings, and assured to make an effort with donors for their generous contributions.

The Bureau welcomed the planned "Forest Day" at the UNFCCC COP-13 in Bali in December 2007, encouraging the UNFF Secretariat's active participation in it, and also to use this opportunity to showcase the UNFF7 outcome and to spread the word on the International Year of Forests 2011.

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Purnama thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting. Mr. Purnama then adjourned the meeting at 2:00 pm.