

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Seventh Session (UNFF7 Bureau)**

Minutes of the first meeting

UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, New York
Wednesday, 21 June 2006
10:00 AM – 12:45 PM

Participation

Bureau members: Mr. Hans Hoogeveen, Mr. Arvids Ozols and Mr. Andre-Jules Madingou. Mr. Razif Mubin represented H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali and Mr. Andres Landerretche represented H.E. Mr. Cristian Maquieira.

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

Secretary of the Forum: Ms. Vivian Pliner.

Others: Mr. Obame Jean Christian, Gabon Mission.

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

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda
2. Decision on the Bureau chairmanship
3. Information about the preparations for the ad hoc working group on the non-legally binding instrument and UNFF7 session
4. Interagency collaboration and regional aspects of the international arrangement on forests
5. Information about the 2006 ECOSOC session
 - 5.1 Adoption of UNFF6 report and
 - 5.2 Meeting of the Chairmen of the functional commissions with the ECOSOC Bureau and a panel discussion on 7 July 2006
6. Decision on the next meeting and scheduling the future meetings of the Bureau
7. Other matters

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda

Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, welcomed the Bureau members to the first meeting of the Bureau of UNFF7. He informed the Bureau that H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali, and H.E. Mr. Cristian Maquieira, Bureau members from Malaysia and Chile respectively, had sent regrets for their inability to attend the meeting due to prior commitments. He also informed the Bureau that their representatives from the Permanent Missions were participating on their behalf.

Mr. Patosaari took the opportunity to brief the Bureau on the historical context of the international forest policy process leading to the establishment of the current international arrangement on forests, including the role of the UN Forum on Forests. He also briefed the

Bureau on the working modalities of the Bureau and its interaction with the Secretariat. Upon his proposal, the agenda of the meeting was adopted.

2. Decision on the Bureau chairmanship

As the Forum will formally elect the Chairman only on the opening day of the seventh session on 16 April 2007 in New York, Mr. Patosaari requested 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. Hans Hoogeveen (The Netherlands) to act as the Chair of the UNFF7 Bureau. Mr. Hoogeveen 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.

3. Information about the preparations for the ad hoc working group on the non-legally binding instrument and UNFF7 session

The Bureau discussed the outcome of the sixth session, in particular, the issues regarding the preparations for the development of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, the meeting of the ad hoc working group (AHWG) on the “instrument” and UNFF7. As a result, the following decisions were taken:

3.1 Country proposals on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests

While making a compilation of country proposals (deadline for submission of country proposals 30 June 2006), the Bureau requested the Secretariat to analyze all the proposals and prepare a note highlighting commonalities, differences and gaps.

3.2 Ad hoc working group (AHWG)

The Bureau decided that the dates and venue of the meeting of the ad hoc working group on the non-legally binding instrument would be 11 to 15 December 2006 in New York, taking into account that the outcome of AHWG should be made available to all member States prior to UNFF7.

3.3 UNFF7

The Bureau took note of the complexity in preparing a new multi-year programme of work (MYPOW) for UNFF7 to adopt. Accordingly, the Bureau requested the Secretariat to prepare a discussion note on MYPOW for its consideration at the next meeting of the Bureau.

The Bureau also requested the Secretariat to prepare a roadmap for the preparations of the upcoming meetings (AHWG and UNFF7), which may indicate dates of regular bureau meetings, the possibility of and need for holding informal briefings, country-led initiatives, and a calendar of events of forest policy-related international and regional meetings.

It expressed hope that the possibility of a county-led initiative (CLI) would be very timely and useful for clarifying issues and facilitating consultations to advance the work of UNFF7.

4. Interagency collaboration and regional aspects of the international arrangement on forests

The Bureau emphasized a need for the continued effort to enhance collaboration, cooperation and coordination with CPF and other forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions, instruments and processes. The Bureau was also of the view that approaches to enhance such collaboration and cooperation should also focus on governing bodies of such organizations, institutions, instruments and processes.

The Bureau asked the Secretariat to prepare discussion notes on: (i) interagency collaboration, including the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and cooperation with governing bodies of CPF member organizations", and (ii) regional aspects in the context of the future MYPOW.

The Bureau appreciated the practice of seconding professional officers to the UNFF Secretariat by FAO, ITTO and UNEP, but noted with concern the current decision by FAO not to continue this mutually beneficial practice. It decided that the Chair would approach those organizations, especially FAO, for their continued staff secondment.

5. Information about the 2006 ECOSOC session

5.1 Adoption of UNFF6 report

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau about the process leading to the adoption of the report of UNFF6 in the substantive session of ECOSOC in July 2006. It also informed the Bureau of the series of informal consultations of the ECOSOC session, including on the UNFF, held in past weeks. It was envisaged that during deliberations at ECOSOC on the report of UNFF6, the member States of ECOSOC may request programme budget implications (PBI) of the draft resolution.

From the informal consultations on ECOSOC, it was also noted that member States may propose to amend the exact "year" from 2010 to 2011, since a proposal to declare the international year of forests as 2010 has been adopted by the CBD COP as the international year of biological diversity.

5.2 Meeting of the Chairmen of the functional commissions with the ECOSOC Bureau and a panel discussion on 7 July 2006

Mr. Hoogeveen has received an invitation from the President of ECOSOC to participate in a meeting between the Bureau of ECOSOC and the chairs of the functional commissions, and to a panel discussion with the chairs of the functional commissions and member States on 7 July 2006. The Bureau agreed that Mr. Hoogeveen's participation should provide a good opportunity to showcase UNFF and its contribution to ECOSOC's new mandate. This participation would also facilitate further cooperation and collaboration among the functional commissions of ECOSOC.

6. Decision on the next meeting and scheduling of bureau meetings in the future

The Bureau decided to hold meetings at regular intervals, possibly every second month. Such a schedule was expected to facilitate consultations and decision-making for the preparations of the session. In addition, it would hold additional meetings if and when required. Accordingly, for the rest of 2006, it would convene the following meetings:

- *Second meeting:* 2-day meeting in second half of August 2006 (exact date to be determined by the end of June 2006 after consulting with all Bureau members);
- *Third meeting:* In late September or early October 2006; and
- *Fourth meeting:* Prior to ad hoc working group meeting in December 2006.

The Bureau, as a principle, would meet in New York.

7. Other matters

The Bureau considered some additional issues.

7.1 UNFF Trust Fund

The Secretariat briefed on the status and use of the trust fund for various purposes, particularly to support travel of developing country participants to UNFF sessions. It appealed to the Bureau for fundraising. The Bureau noted a need of additional funding for successful preparations of the upcoming AHWG and UNFF7 meetings, and assured that they would approach member States from the regions for their contributions. In this regard, Mr. Hoogeveen informed the Bureau that the Government of The Netherlands had decided to make a contribution to the UNFF trust fund.

7.2 Stakeholder participation

The Bureau noted that active and full participation by major groups in UNFF would remain a key element for success. It also noted the absence of major group representation for the “Local Authorities” group in past UNFF sessions, and the somewhat reduced interest and participation of other major groups, in particular, by the private sector. The Bureau agreed to explore ways to enhance interest and participation of all stakeholder groups, including local authorities and the private sector. In this regard, a possibility of convening an informal consultation with major group representatives prior to the meeting of the AHWG in December 2006 was also considered.

The Bureau would further discuss this issue at its next meeting.

7.3 Preparation of other Codes

The Bureau noted with some surprise the draft codes on planted forests and fire management being prepared by FAO and presented at its regional forestry commission meetings in recent months. The reason for surprise was that those drafts were under preparation at the same time as governments were intensely deliberating and negotiating almost the same issues at UNFF. Neither the UNFF nor UNFF Secretariat (as a CPF member) was informed of this drafting process. Considering the outcome of the sixth session of UNFF, which decided to develop and conclude a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests at its seventh session, the Bureau would consult with member States and consider ways to avoid confusion and overlaps of this kind.

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Hoogeveen thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 12:45 pm.