

Minutes of the first meeting of the UNFF2 Bureau

UNFF Secretariat, DC-2 Building, New York

25 September 2001

Started at 10:00 a.m

Ended at 04:30 p.m.

Attendees

Bureau Members and contact persons: Ms. Patricia Chaves (Vice Chair, Costa Rica), Mr. Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Vice Chair, Iran), Mr. Ositadinma Anaedu (Vice Chair, Nigeria), Mr. Knut Øistad (Chairman, Norway), Mr. Dmitry I. Maksimych (Contact person, Russian Federation), and Mr. Geir Tønnessen (Contact person, Norway)

UNFF Secretariat: Jag Maini, Kyaw Kyaw Shane, Mahendra Joshi and Mia Söderlund

ECOSOC Secretariat: Vladimir Zelenov

DESA: Mr. Nitin Desai, USG/DESA also participated in the meeting for a short period.

The objectives of the first meeting of the Bureau were to:

1. decide on the chairmanship of the Bureau
2. review of the preparations for the second session (4-15 March 2005, San Jose, Costa Rica), in particular the
 - organization of work for UNFF2
 - documentation
 - ministerial dialogue with heads of member organizations of the CPF
 - high-level ministerial segment
 - coordination/collaboration with CSD-10
 - multi-stakeholder dialogue
 - establishment of expert groups
 - informal briefings on preparations for UNFF2
3. update on CPF activities
4. update on DESA's follow-up on the UNFF1 decisions
 - letters to Governments
 - host-country agreement
 - Secretariat staffing
5. Scheduling the future meetings of the Bureau
6. Expert group meeting on MAR in Yokohama and other matters

Jag Maini, Coordinator and head of the UNFF Secretariat welcomed the Bureau members and their contact persons, on behalf of DESA.

1. Bureau Matters

1.1 Chairmanship

Jag Maini, UNFF Secretariat, thanked Mr. Anaedu for coordinating with the Bureau members the nomination of the chairman of the Bureau. He informed that Mr. Knut Øistad has accepted to be the chairman of the UNFF2 Bureau. The Forum will elect the Chairman formally during its second session.

Mr. Øistad thanked the Bureau members for their support for his chairmanship. He expressed his intention to work in close consultation with all Bureau members and the Secretariat.

Mr. Øistad then chaired the meeting. The provisional agenda was adopted to proceed with the business of the meeting.

2. Preparation for the second session of UNFF (4-15 March 2002)

2.1. Organization of work for UNFF2

The Secretariat introduced an organization of work for UNFF2, with revisions based on the suggestions made at by the informal consultation with some Bureau members on 2 August 2001. The Bureau reviewed the organization of work and allocation of time in context of the UNFF mandate, priority to the substantive items under consideration at the second session and practical considerations. The Bureau appreciated suggestions and proposals received from countries on the organization of work for UNFF2.

The Bureau made the following suggestions:

- Allocate only one half-day meeting for "Trade and sustainable forest management";
- Allocate two full days (4 Plenary meetings) for Ministerial Dialogue with heads of CPF organizations and
- High-level ministerial segment on 13-14 March (Wednesday and Thursday);
- Arrange a plenary meeting on the morning of Friday, 15 March to jointly consider the reports of two working groups; and
- Undertake advance preparation towards expected outcomes of the high-level ministerial segment.

2.2. Status of documentation for UNFF2

The Bureau expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and progress being made on the preparation of documents by the Secretariat and CPF member organizations. CPF member organizations have agreed to assume focal agency roles for specific topics.

The following six SG's reports will be prepared on the progress in implementation:

- National forest programmes;
- Combating deforestation and forest degradation;
- Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands, and the promotion of natural and planted forests;
- Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems;
- Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover; and
- Monitoring, assessment and reporting, including concepts, terminology and definitions.

In addition, the Secretariat will prepare the following four Notes:

- to transmit the inputs from Multi-stakeholders (as addendum);
- on Organization of High-level ministerial segment and Ministerial dialogue with heads of CPF member organizations;
- to transmit the Framework for CPF's contributions to the work of the UNFF; and
- on "Trade and sustainable forest management".

The following additional non-papers will also be prepared by the Secretariat on:

- terms of reference of the of ad hoc international expert groups; and
- preliminary proposal on the formulation of criteria for the 2005 review.

2.3. Dialogue with heads of member organizations of the CPF, and

2.4. High-level ministerial segment

The Bureau concurrently reviewed the two important agenda items of UNFF2. As noted earlier, the Bureau decided to allocate two full days (morning and afternoon meetings of 13-14 March) for these two events. This would facilitate governments to plan ahead for the participation of respective ministers.

The members exchanged views on the ways to organize a highly productive dialogue between the ministers and CPF heads with concrete outputs, and hoped that CPF member organizations will be represented at the very senior level.

While the dialogue would provide an opportunity for both the ministers and CPF heads to exchange views and information on their respective activities on forests, the Bureau hoped that this event should also focus on:

- commitments from CPF members to support UNFF's MYPOW and POA;
 - mobilization of financial and political support to facilitate the work of CPF in supporting UNFF activities; and
 - ministerial commitments for the implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action.
- Allocation of one half-day meeting for the dialogue was proposed.

On the planning of the high-level ministerial segment, the members underscored the significance of this first such high-level event in the Forum. Accordingly, the Bureau would need to pay attention to the structure, substantive focus and anticipated outcome of the segment. In this regard, the members suggested to:

- follow the CSD-9 model, combining formal speeches and interactive session;
- allocate time for formal speeches by ministers or their representatives;
- the Government of Costa Rica to organize a ministers-only morning (breakfast) session to set the tone and also to encourage participation by larger number of ministers. It would be essential to also arrange interpreter services for the breakfast meeting;
- encourage the industrialized countries to send ministers responsible for both forest and for development cooperation, to effectively address the forest and international cooperation issues;
- organize the ministerial segment close to the end of the second week so that ministers can proceed to Finance for Development (FfD) Conference in Monterrey, Mexico (18-22 March 2002); and
- consider organizing a panel discussion by ministers.

The members considered that MYPOW and POA would be the roadmap for future ministerial segment in 2005. There was a considerable exchange of views on the possible options for inputs to the WSSD. It was suggested that a Ministerial message be sent to the preparatory process of WSSD, in particular to the WSSD preparatory Ministerial meeting in Indonesia. The input to WSSD could include highlights of the progress since Rio in implementation of certain aspects of sustainable forest management as well as challenges ahead.

Mr. Nitin Desai, underscored the significance of both the ministerial dialogue with heads of the CPF organizations as well as the high-level ministerial segment in the UNFF process. He exchanged views with the Bureau on ways to make these events effective and meaningful.

2.5. Coordination/collaboration with CSD-10

Bureau agreed to explore the possibility of organizing a joint meeting with the Bureau of the CSD-10, as has been the practice in the past. Mr. Anaedu, who is also the member of CSD-10 Bureau agreed to coordinate this matter with the CSD Bureau.

2.6. Multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSHD)

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau about the preparation towards the organization of the multi-stakeholder dialogue, particularly on the structure of dialogue, identification of major groups and outlines for the discussion papers. The Bureau agreed that this was a very significant event and that the focus of such dialogues should be on the thematic "Elements" of the session so as to contribute the intergovernmental deliberations. The Bureau members noted the desirability to include, as appropriate, inputs from relevant major groups. The Bureau members agreed on the need to contact appropriate major groups with a request to facilitate the organization of MSHD and to prepare their discussion papers as an input to MSHD. The MSHD should be organized in the beginning of the first week of UNFF2 to give the possibility to utilize the outcome in the remaining part of the second session of UNFF.

2.7. Informal consultations for establishing expert groups

Bureau members emphasized the importance of the international expert groups as the subsidiary bodies of UNFF. The members also underscored the need to select internationally well-recognized experts on the themes of the three expert groups that would be established by UNFF2. Regional groups will be requested to select five experts from each region for each of the three expert groups. Once the expert groups are established at UNFF2, they can start functioning under the general guidance of the Chairman of the Bureau. Bureau members should consult and coordinate with member countries in their respective regions on the

selection of experts, as well as on the composition, terms of reference and scheduling of meetings; and the Secretariat will draft terms of reference for each international expert group for the consideration by the Bureau at its next meeting.

2.8. Informal briefings of delegations in New York on preparations for UNFF2

Bureau members noted the usefulness of such briefings in the past and encouraged the Secretariat to organize similar meetings once the documents are finalized. The Bureau members suggested organizing general briefing as well as separate briefings to regional groups. The Bureau members will make efforts to participate in such briefings.

3. Update on CPF activities

3.1. Focal Agency role

3.2. Framework for the CPF's Contribution to the work of the UNFF

3.3. Next CPF meetings

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau of the activities of the CPF, including the outcome of the recent CPF meeting of 6-7 August in Rome. CPF has been established by the members of the previous "Inter-agency Taskforce on Forests (ITFF)", with three additional international instruments and organizations (FCCC, CCD and GEF) as its new members. So far, CPF has held three meetings, and two meetings are scheduled in the near future (8-9 October in New York, and 9-10 November in Yokohama). The Bureau appreciated the ongoing activities of the CPF in support of the UNFF. In particular, it noted with appreciation the finalization of "Focal agency" roles of CPF members, preparation of the SG's reports for UNFF2, and the work in progress on CPF "Framework".

It is suggested that it would be desirable for the Chairman or a representative of the Bureau to attend the future meetings of the CPF.

4. Follow-up to the informal consultation meeting of 2 August

4.1. Letters to Governments from DESA

The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the letter by Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary General sent to all permanent missions to the United Nations in New York requesting, by 15 October 2001, to provide:

- voluntary country reports on implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action;
- suggestions on intersessional work to be undertaken by ad-hoc expert groups and country sponsored initiatives; and
- nomination of a national focal point in each country on matters related to UNFF matters.

The letter also alerted countries about the high-level ministerial segment and the dialogue between the Ministers and the Executive Heads of the CPF organizations.

So far no response has been received from countries.

4.2. Host country agreement and missions to Costa Rica

The Bureau was briefed on the host country agreement between the UN and the Government of Costa Rica, the host country for the UNFF second session. A mission from the appropriate departments of the UN will visit Costa Rica from 2-4 October, under the leadership of Mr. Jaime Hurtubia, of the UNFF Secretariat.

Ms. Patricia Chaves (Costa Rica) informed that her Government is reviewing the draft agreement and has planned meeting between the UN mission and concerned officials in Costa Rica, including the Minister of Environment.

4.3. Secretariat staffing

The Bureau expressed deep concern about the inadequacy of staff in the Secretariat in context of the magnitude of the substantial tasks ahead.

The Bureau also discussed this matter with Mr. Desai and inquired about DESA's plans towards the recruitment of the next Coordinator and Head, other staff members and secondment from CPF member organizations. Mr. Desai assured that he was expediting the process as much as it can be done under the circumstances. He explained that he has no authority to recruit the personnel until the regular budget, for the biennium 2002-2003, is appropriated by the General Assembly.

5. Future meetings of the Bureau

Bureau agreed to hold at least two meetings before March 2002. A tentative date for the next meeting is set for 26 or 27 November 2001.

6. Other matters

6.1. Planned country-led initiatives on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR)

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the Government-led initiative on MAR in Yokohama, Japan on 5-8 November 2001. Considering its relevance to the work of UNFF2, the Bureau underscored the need for wider participation by countries in it. The Bureau members also requested the Chairman to attend the meeting and to reinforce the Bureau's interest in it.

The Bureau was also informed of another possible MAR meeting in Rome, currently under consideration by some interested governments and organizations. The Secretariat will keep the Bureau members informed of the status of both of these meetings.

6.2. Other issues

The Bureau appreciated Mr. Desai for joining the meeting and for sharing his views on planning for the UNFF2.

The Bureau considered making the reports of the Bureau meetings available to the wider audience.

The members of the Bureau expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for the excellent planning and execution of the Bureau meeting.