

United Nations Forum on Forests

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Bureau of the Twelfth Session

28 October 2016 (2:30 - 4:45 pm), UN Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

Participation

Bureau Members: Mr. Peter Besseau (Canada), Ms. Clarissa Souza Della Nina (Brazil), Mr. Wu Zhimin (China), Mr. Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic)

Secretary of the Forum: Ms. Sangeeta Sharma (Deputy Secretary)

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Mita Sen, Mr. Ryo Nakamura

Others: Amb. Hans Hoogeveen (AHEG Co-Chair, the Netherlands), Ms. Yingwen Jiang (China), Ms. Natalie Benešová (Czech Republic)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

1. **The Bureau agreed that UNFF12 will be convened from 1-5 May 2017 at UNHQ, New York.**
2. **The Secretariat will prepare a concept note for a possible informal/special event that may be organized on the margins of UNFF12 to provide a platform for dialogue with chief executives of the private sector, industries, philanthropic organizations and other stakeholders.**
3. **The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the meeting of the Working Group of the Forum scheduled to be convened from 16-20 January 2017 at UNHQ, New York, and an additional meeting through electronic means, as and when deemed necessary.**

Provisional Agenda

Third Meeting of the Bureau of the Twelfth Session

28 October 2016 (2:30-4:45 pm) – UN Conference Centre, Bangkok

- 1- Adoption of the provisional agenda**
- 2- Review of the outcome of AHEG2 and the next steps**
- 3- Preparations for UNFF12**
 - a. Nomination of the Bureau Member from the African Group to the UNFF12 Bureau**
 - b. Letter from the President of ECOSOC, inviting the Forum's input to the 2017 HLPP session**
 - c. Dates of UNFF12**
 - d. Organization of UNFF12 and other issues for consideration**
- 4- Update on upcoming events**
- 5- Next meeting of the UNFF12 Bureau**
- 6- Other matters**

1. Adoption of the provisional agenda

Mr. Peter Besseau, Chair of the UNFF12 Bureau, welcomed members of the Bureau and the Secretariat to the third meeting of the UNFF12 Bureau, held in conjunction with the second meeting of the UNFF open-ended intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group (AHEG2) in Bangkok, Thailand.

The provisional agenda of the first meeting was adopted.

2. Review of the outcome of the AHEG2 and the next steps

The Bureau invited Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, AHEG Co-Chair, to report on the outcome of the AHEG2. Ambassador Hoogeveen underscored that good progress was made by the expert group on all aspects of the building blocks and options for the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) and the quadrennial programme of work (4POW), particularly those parts that related to goals and targets. He highlighted that the development of guiding principles for goals and targets, identification of available data and information for goals and targets, along with other concrete ideas, provide a firm basis for the preparation for the Working Group of the Forum. He pointed out that the forthcoming CPF Organization-led Initiative on development of global forest indicators to be held in Rome in November 2016, could also provide a good basis of inputs for the Working Group to consider numerical targets for the UNSPF. He noted that other key elements such as the role of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN), the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), regional and inter-regional coordination, as well as major groups and other stakeholders were emphasised during the deliberations of AHEG2.

The Bureau welcomed the outcome of the AHEG2 and expressed its appreciation to the leadership of the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen (The Netherlands) and Ambassador Gholamhossein Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran). The Bureau stressed the importance to build on the outcome of AHEG2 to prepare for the Working Group of the Forum scheduled from 16-20 January 2017 at UNHQ in New York, noting in particular the short timelines and need for on-going engagement and consultation.

The Deputy Secretary informed the Bureau on the rule and procedures related to nomination of the Co-Chairs of the Working Group. She also noted that part of the role of the Working Group Co-Chairs would be to serve as ex officio members of the Bureau for the Special Session of the Forum.

The Bureau considered the next steps in preparing for the Working Group, and stressed the need to expedite the nomination process so that the Co-Chairs' proposals for the UNSPF and 4POW could be prepared in a timely manner. The Bureau noted that the January meeting represents a milestone in the process begun with the transition of the work of the AHEG Co-chairs to the Working Group Co-Chairs who are ex officio members of the Bureau. As such, the Bureau underscored both the need and opportunity for it to be actively engaged and work closely with the Working Group Co-chairs over the coming weeks and over the period of the Working Group meeting. In terms of proposals for the UNSPF and 4POW, it was suggested that any proposals be made available by 15 December 2016, to allow for sufficient time for reflection and preparation by Member States. It was also noted that the Co-Chairs of the Working Group may wish to consider holding informal consultations, possibly in the first half of December 2016, at UNHQ, New York. Such consultations could facilitate successful deliberations by the Working Group on key issues such as goals and targets of the UNSPF. The Bureau also emphasized the importance of further consideration of the 4POW for 2017-20, and also highlighted the need to link the 4POWs to the annual thematic focus of the HLPF sessions.

The UNFF Secretariat informed the Bureau of the current status of the UNFF trust fund, with regard to funding for the Working Group. It was noted that to date, no pledges had been received for the Forum's Working Group and Special Session scheduled in January 2017. The funding requirements for the meeting

were mainly for travel of eligible participants, estimated at approximately 50 eligible participants based on past participation. It was also noted that interpretation and conference services for the Working Group and Special Session were covered by the regular budget of the UN.

The Bureau noted the importance of raising funds in time for the Working Group, in order to enable the widest possible participation of countries in these important discussions. The Bureau also agreed to explore means to further encourage donor contributions for the Working Group and Special Session.

3. Preparations for UNFF12

a. Nomination of the Bureau Member from the African Group to the UNFF12 Bureau

The Deputy Secretary informed the Bureau that the nomination from the African Group of its bureau member to the UNFF12 Bureau still remains pending. She noted that a letter to expedite the nomination process was sent to the Permanent Missions in New York, with the deadline of 21 October 2016.

The Bureau expressed its concern that the absence of the African bureau member could have a potential impact on the course of the discussions on the UNSPF and 4POW. In this regard, the importance of informal outreach to Member States from the African Group was noted.

b. Letter from the President of ECOSOC for Forum's input to the HLPF 2017

The Deputy Secretary informed the Bureau that the President of ECOSOC had invited the Bureau Chair to provide substantive inputs to the 2017 HLPF by 28 April 2017. In particular, input was sought on the Forum's contribution towards the 2030 Agenda in general, and the SDGs and targets relevant to the Forum. The theme of the 2017 HLPF is "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

The Bureau discussed possible ways and means for the Forum to substantively contribute to the work of the 2017 HLPF, and decided to request a one month extension of the deadline for input to after UNFF12 in May 2017. This would enable UNFF12 deliberations on this subject matter to be included as part of the Forum's input to the 2017 HLPF. The importance of synchronizing the timing of the UNFF sessions with those of HLPF, in subsequent years, was also highlighted and, in particular, the HLPF for 2018, which will address SDG 15, among others. The Bureau considered that serious and early attention to preparation of the UNFF for robust and relevant input into the HLPF process in 2018 will be of significant value to the Forum and IAF. This matter should be accommodated in the UNFF12 agenda.

c. Date of UNFF12

The Deputy Secretary briefed the Bureau on the availability of conference rooms for UNFF12 at UNHQ in New York in May 2017, and informed that the only available timeslot in May was 1-5 May 2017 and that a draft ECOSOC resolution (E/2017/L.8) has been issued in this regard.

The Bureau agreed that UNFF12 would be convened from 1-5 May 2017 at UNHQ, New York. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to inform CPF members of the dates of UNFF12, so as to avoid overlap in timing of major meetings being organized by them.

d. Approach to organization of UNFF12 and possible issues for consideration at UNFF12

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on possible key operational elements for inclusion for UNFF12 based on the UNFF11 resolution as well as additional items contained in the AHEG Co-Chairs' revised proposal for 4POW. Key items included, *inter alia*, implementation of the UNSPF; contribution of the UNFF to the SDG process and the work of the HLPF (for 2017 and 2018); and review of the work of the GFFFN. The UNFF12 agenda and its organization of work are in a significant measure dependent upon the outcomes of the January Working Group meeting and Special Session of the Forum. As such, they will be finalized after

the conclusion of the meetings. The Secretariat informed the Bureau of the UN requirements for official documentation to be ready ten weeks in advance of formal meetings. To this end, the provisional agenda and most of the official documentation for UNFF12 would be ready by late February. In this regard, Bureau members agreed to consult with their respective regions to bring forward ideas and get reactions to ideas for the May meeting as they take shape, by the working group meeting in January 2017.

The Bureau discussed possible priorities to be considered at UNFF12. They noted the transitional nature of the session due to its timing soon after the conclusion of the Working Group and the Special Session as well as because the one week technical meeting represents a new modus operandi for the Forum. It was stressed that UNFF12 should focus on providing a platform to share best practices on implementation and actions to achieve goals and targets of the eventual UNSPF, engaging all stakeholders, including CPF, regional and subregional partners, major groups and other stakeholders, particularly the private sector and industry. The need to focus on concrete, relevant and do-able actions within the context of the meeting and 4POW was also underlined by the Bureau. A possibility to convene a high-level segment at UNFF13 in 2018 was also discussed, as a possible way to provide a solid contribution to the review of progress made on the achievement of forest-related SDGs scheduled to be held at the 2018 HLPF.

The Bureau discussed ideas on providing a platform for dialogue with the private sector and industry, as well as philanthropic and civil society organizations during UNFF12. This could pave the way for a more ambitious engagement with these groups for UNFF13 and an opportunity to more formally launch the new UNSPF and 4POW and feed into the HLPF during the first “Policy Forum” under the new strategic plan. The importance of enhancing two-way communication with the chief executives of the private sector and industries was underscored. In this regard, the possibility of organising an informal/special event, that may be held in the margins of UNFF12 was discussed. It was suggested that such an event could be convened during the evening, at a venue outside UNHQ, to allow for the widest possible participation.

In light of this discussion, the Secretariat was requested to prepare a one-page concept note for an informal/special event to be organized on the margins of UNFF12, to provide a platform for dialogue with the private sector and industries with members of the Forum.

4. Update on the upcoming events

The Secretariat provided an update on preparations for upcoming events, including: i) CPF Organization-led Initiative (OLI) in support of the Forum entitled “Development of global forest indicators to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the IAF Strategic Plan” scheduled to be held from 28-30 November 2016 at FAO HQ in Rome; and ii) a UNFF expert group meeting on the cycle and format for national reporting, tentatively scheduled to be held from 7-10 February 2017 in Brasilia, Brazil, subject to confirmation.

The Bureau underscored the importance of these meetings in the context of developing targets for the goals of the UNSPF, and to ensure effective monitoring of their progress once the UNSPF is adopted and implemented.

5. Next meeting of the Bureau

The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the meeting of the Working Group of the Forum scheduled to be convened from 16-20 January 2017 at UNHQ, New York. The Bureau agreed to meet twice during the meeting: once before and once after the Working Group. The Bureau also agreed to hold a meeting through electronic means, as and when deemed necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.