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FINLAND'S SUBMISSION FOR THE REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENT ON FORESTS

Dear Sir,

Please find attached Finland's submission for the review of the International Arrangement on Forests in response to the invitation by the UNFF Secretariat (ref. UNFF-13-L-HMM-219).

The submission has been prepared in a participatory manner involving relevant government ministries and stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,



Juha Ojala
Director General

UNFF Intersessional Activities on the International Arrangement of Forests

FINLAND's Views on the International Arrangement on Forests

General

- Finland aligns itself with the submission of the European Union and its member States and provides this submission as an additional input.
- Finland considers the assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests extremely important. In this respect we wish to provide the following initial views as prepared on the basis of inter-ministerial and stakeholder consultation.
- At this stage we focus on views and experiences concerning mainly the past performance of the IAF. We feel that timing for the future options will be later after getting some feedback from the independent review and the outcome of the first AHEG meeting.
- The format for soliciting views and proposals provided by the UNFF Secretariat was found too rigid and the questions somewhat leading. Consequently, in our reply we will only follow the general headings of the format.

Section B: Performance of the United Nations Forum on Forests and its processes since 2000

(including AHEGs, CLIs/OLIs, involvement of major groups, International Year/Day of Forests)

- UNFF has provided a forum at a high level in the UN system to address forest related issues in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The UNFF has also provided a global framework for forest policy coordination and development and promoted sustainable forest management as part of sustainable development. The universal membership is unique within the UN system. The wide range of substantive issues covered within its programmes of work has emphasized the complex nature of forest issues compared to the forest related conventions, which consider forest issues from a much narrower angle.
- The IPF-IFF-UNFF process has been a collective learning process about common understanding on sustainable forest management. Especially the IPF/IFF phase brought some positive changes into national policies and practices (eg. national forest programmes, participatory approaches, stakeholder involvement). On the other hand, many of the UNFF resolutions have just repeated what had already been agreed during the IPF-IFF process or even been weaker than the IPF-IFF proposals for action. There is not much evidence that UNFF resolutions have had such impact at the national level as the previous IPF/IFF proposals for action.
- The AHEG meetings have been important to discuss and prepare specific issues in a slightly more informal setting than the ordinary UNFF sessions. The AHEG meetings have also kept forest issues at the global agenda between the UNFF sessions especially in 2007-2015 when the UNFF has met every second year.
- The CLI- and OLI-meetings have been a flexible tool to focus on certain specific issues outside the UN-setting. Over 30 CLI-meetings have shown the commitment of countries to promote the work of the UNFF. Some new ideas have been promoted through the CLIs, e.g. the CLI "Contribution of Forests to a Green Economy" contributed to the introduction of the concept of "green economy" into the Rio+20 process and UNFF10 resolutions. In many cases, however, the outcome of the CLIs has not really been incorporated into the work of the UNFF.
- The UNFF has recognized the major groups as important stakeholders in forest policy development and implementation. However, their participation has been somewhat marginalized into a separate multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions without a direct link to the work of the UNFF or the outcome of the UNFF sessions. This trend has continuously strengthened during last years.
- In principle, communication on forest related issues is important. International Year of Forests might have increased the visibility of forest sector. On the other hand there are very many international years on

different topics and it is not sure how much it really created awareness outside the forest sector. It should be carefully considered what the role of the UNFF Secretariat in communication is.

- Despite its broad mandate the UNFF has not really succeeded to be the leader in global forest policy issues. Other forest related processes (notably the climate changes negotiations and to some extent FLEGT-issues and land use issues) has achieved much more political attention. The commitment of countries to UNFF work has weakened during the years and the impact of UNFF resolutions to national policies and practices due to their soft law nature has been modest. The UNFF in its present form can be considered rather expensive, bureaucratic and inefficient and it has not managed to have any major impact to other forest related processes or to other sectors.
- The major challenge at the moment is to have an impact to the post-2015 development agenda considerations in order to have the contribution of forest sector in green economy recognized. At the same time there is an urgent need for forest sector to contribute to the preparation of post 2020 global climate agreement.

Section C: The Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (Forest Instrument) and the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs)

- Agreeing on the four global objectives on forests and the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests can be considered as important achievements within the work of the UNFF. In the Finnish bilateral development cooperation the GOFs defined in the Forest Instrument are recognized as basis for forest sector cooperation.
- The global objectives are fairly clear (although monitoring the progress of some of them is difficult, e.g. forest degradation, the forest-based social benefits and the area of sustainably managed forests). Some positive progress has been made in achieving the global objectives, notably in GOF3 and GOF4 and to some extent in GOF1. However, it is evident that the progress has greatly benefitted from the decisions and funding mechanisms of forest related conventions (notably CBD, UNFCCC), e.g. in the increase of protected areas and the official development assistance.
- The pilot projects in the implementation of the Forest Instrument have given some positive feedback.
- The weakness of the Forest Instrument, however, is its soft law nature. It is not known outside the forest sector and even within the forest sector it is not really recognized as an important tool. Its impact on national policies and practices and even on international cooperation does not seem to be significant.

Section D: The UNFF Secretariat

- The management of the secretariat is the key issue. There is room for improvement in order to focus on priorities, provide additional value, and to work effectively and cost-efficient manner. The secretariat is small but its optimal size and the structure depends on its tasks and mandate.
- The location of the secretariat at the UN headquarters brings opportunities by providing direct links to the high level policy discussions e.g. on the post 2015 development agenda, as well as comprehensive representation due to permanent representations located in New York, but on the other hand also challenges e.g. due to the rules and procedures regarding the headquarters.
- In recent year communication has been emphasized in the work of the secretariat. This prioritization might have decreased attention on substantive matters.
- The substantive capacity of the secretariat has probably weakened over the years, e.g. the CPF member organizations have not seconded senior officials to the secretariat recently.

Section E: Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and its member organizations

- The voluntary network of CPF organizations has increased networking, coordination and collaboration between them. The support by the CPF and its member organizations in the work of UNFF has been essential in some areas (e.g. forest financing). The Global Forest Expert Panels have increased the use of scientific information in the political decision making. Another good example of the work of the CPF is streamlining the forest related reporting. The joint statements by the CPF to other forest related processes e.g. on climate change, biodiversity and land use issues have increased their weight and visibility.
- The CPF member organizations have supported directly the work of the UNFF by seconding senior officials to the UNFF Secretariat. This direct support, however, have decreased over the years.
- The UNFF can only give guidance to the CPF and it is up to its member organizations to allocate resources to the UNFF related work. Some CPF member organizations feel the CPF as an obligation and many member organizations are rather passive. Each CPF organization has its own agenda and there is competition between them and so allocating resources for joint actions is a challenge.
- Linkage between the member countries, UNFF and CPF could be intensified. It would be worthwhile to consider how to address this, e.g. the UNFF bureau or its Chair to attend the CPF meetings.

Section F: Forest related financing / Means of Implementation

- Means of implementation has been in the agenda of every UNFF session. The discussions have focused mainly on forest related financing in developing countries although means of implementation covers also other issues.
- The key question is how the governments are willing to improve the enabling conditions and policy means at the national level in order to channel investments from different sources into forest sector.
- Financing needs and opportunities have been analyzed thoroughly during the years and there is wealth of information available. The CPF has produced the online Sourcebook on Funding for Sustainable Forest Management, which should be used more efficiently by the governments. The active governments have benefitted from different financing options which have increased considerably over the years. The Facilitative Process has helped to some extent some countries in identifying funding sources.
- The discussion on forest financing and especially on the Global Forest Fund has dominated the UNFF sessions and taken too much attention from other substantive issues. The discussion might have created unrealistic expectations concerning increased forest financing through UNFF.