

United Nations Forum on Forests

First Meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests

Agenda Item 4: Introduction of the official documents by Mr. Hossein Meini Meybodi

UNFF Secretariat

Monday 24 February 2014

Dear Colleagues,

- There are three official documents for this meeting:
- The provisional agenda and annotations are contained in document E/CN.18/AEG/2014/1, the Secretariat Note is contained in document E/CN.18/AEG/2014/2, and the Compilation of Member States and stakeholder views and proposals on the IAF are contained in document E/CN.18/2014/INF1. All three documents have been made available on the UNFF website and are contained in the Information CD prepared for this meeting, which also contains other useful background documents related to the IAF.
- Hard copies of the provisional agenda and Secretariat Note have been distributed. Due the length of the compilation (285 pages) it was not possible to distribute hard copies of this document.
- The Secretariat Note provides an overview of the IAF, its components and related intersessional activities.
- ECOSOC resolution 2000/35 laid the foundation for the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) by establishing the UNFF. The main objective of the IAF is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. IAF was further strengthened through ECOSOC Resolution 2006/49.
- The IAF primarily refers to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) itself, the Forum's "membership" including Member States of the Forum, acting individually and working together as the Forum; the UNFF Secretariat; the voluntary partnership of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and other relevant inter-governmental organizations which

contribute to the work of the UNFF individually and collectively; regional organizations and processes; and Major Groups who take part in the Forum's sessions. The IAF also includes implementation of the resolutions of the Forum, as well as the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (forest instrument) and the four global objectives on forests (GOFs).

- IAF review, according to relevant resolutions, basically covers:
 - a) Full range of options, including a legally binding instrument on all types of forests, strengthening of the current arrangement, continuation of the current arrangement and other options;
 - b) Past performance of, as well as future options for the UNFF;
 - c) Progress towards implementation of the forest instrument and achievement of the GOFs and its effectiveness, as well as the relationship of the forest instrument with the international conventions and intergovernmental organizations;
 - d) The contribution of forests and the IAF to the internationally agreed development goals;
 - e) The Forum's Secretariat; the CPF and its contributions to the work of the Forum;
 - f) Means of Implementation, including establishment of a voluntary global forest fund, and the Facilitative Process, and
 - g) The UNFF within the context of the UN sustainable development framework, and the UN development agenda beyond 2015.
- According to the multi-year programme adopted in 2007, the eleventh session of the UNFF (UNFF11) in May 2015 should perform this review and decide on the future of the IAF.
- At UNFF10 in April 2013 in Istanbul, Member States decided to undertake several preparatory intersessional activities to ensure UNFF11 has a strong basis to review the effectiveness of the IAF, and make a decision on the future of the IAF.
- These intersessional activities include (i) soliciting views and proposals from Member States and other relevant stakeholders on the IAF, (ii)

carrying out an independent assessment of the IAF, and (iii) holding a maximum of two meetings of the ad hoc expert group to review all inputs, and to discuss the issues and submit its recommendations on the future of the IAF to UNFF11.

- To solicit views and proposals on the IAF, UNFFS prepared a questionnaire which was sent to countries and other stakeholders in June 2013. The submitted views are contained in the compilation which includes views from 46 countries, one from the EU and 2 views from Major Groups. The quantity and quality of the submitted views provides a good indication of the high level of interest, and importance that Members assign to work of the Forum and the IAF review process.
- The terms of reference for the consultants and the co-facilitators for the independent assessment of the IAF were finalized by the UNFF11 Bureau in June 2013. Members of the IAF independent assessment Team are here with us and will soon present a progress report on their work.
- With the convening of the first meeting of the AHEG, we are fully on track and making substantive and timely progress in implementing the IAF intersessional activities, as agreed by UNFF10.
- In addition to these activities, the Secretariat is also engaged in other intersessional activities such as preparing a format for national reporting to UNFF11. You will hear more about this later this week.
- Apart from the IAF review process, there are other important ongoing processes that are closely relevant to the IAF review, namely the SDG and the post 2015 development agenda.
- The process of proposing sustainable development goals (SDGs) is supposed to finish by July 2014. The outcome of this work is planned to be adopted by the General Assembly in September 2014.
- A paper identifying 19 focus areas for SDGs released last week. This paper will be the basis for the Open Working Group to propose the SDGs.
- As the negotiation based on this paper will begin in NY from next week, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) (14 members including UNFF) produced a concise paper on forest related targets for inclusion in the SDGs.

- This is an important input by the CPF members that has multiple benefits for the IAF review, SDGs, and post 2015 development agenda.
- We would like to share with you this concise paper, as this is relevant to the work of the AHEG1 and specifically the discussion on Thursday morning. This document is being distributed now.
- The General Assembly will decide on the post 2015 development agenda in September 2015. This agenda is expected to include the SDGs at its core.
- Designing the Post 2015 development agenda is another opportunity for all members of the Forum and the CPF members to contribute to finding the proper space for forests in the post 2015 development agenda.
- So, these are all considerations that you have to keep in mind during the whole discussions in AHEG1.

Thank you.