



## UNFF-5 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 17 MAY 2005

On Tuesday, delegates reconvened in Plenary to hear remarks from Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai (Kenya) and to discuss future actions, review of the effectiveness, and parameters, as well as preparations for the high-level segment and Multi-stakeholder Dialogue (MSD).

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai (Kenya) recounted the replacement of a natural forest ecosystem in Kenya by monoculture plantations, which has caused land degradation and water shortages. She stated that the foundations of a secure state are a sustainably managed environment, democracy and a culture of peace. She appealed for support for a Congo River Basin forest ecosystem convergence plan for forest protection that has been conceived of by central African heads of state. She stated that while many consultations have taken place concerning the Congo Basin, little action has occurred on the ground. Maathai called for the creation of an efficient, accountable and transparent trust fund managed by international bodies, and suggested that Food and Agriculture Organization play a central role in the convergence plan. Prompted by a question on root causes by IRAN, she commented on trade-offs between short-term economic benefits and long-term sustainability. Maathai emphasized the importance of environmental education in response to Mexico's offer to share its experience with payments for forest environmental services.

COSTA RICA commented that better mechanisms are needed to facilitate information sharing. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES requested guidance in addressing the gap between indigenous and economic interests. Maathai recommended an adaptive approach that respects the rights of local and indigenous people.

**FUTURE ACTIONS, REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS, PARAMETERS:** GHANA, GABON, KENYA, INDIA, SOUTH AFRICA, SENEGAL, NAMIBIA, GUYANA, INDONESIA and ARGENTINA supported remarks made on Monday by JAMAICA, on behalf of G-77/CHINA.

GUATEMALA noted that some experts at the Guadalajara-Zapopan country-led initiative (CLI) in January 2005 had expressed interest in a legally binding instrument (LBI) containing clear goals capable of contributing to the greater social agenda and regional initiatives. MEXICO recommended a high-level political framework with a new mandate, specific tasks, and capacity to provide funding and define a future legal framework. GHANA, on behalf of the AFRICA GROUP, supported by NAMIBIA, GABON, SENEGAL, KENYA and SOUTH AFRICA, stressed the importance of linking forests with the MDGs and balancing social, economic and environmental interests, and noted that lack of funding has hindered national reporting.

SOUTH AFRICA emphasized that implementation must replace dialogue and, supported by INDONESIA and ARGENTINA, take into account developing countries' needs. She recommended accessing existing structures such as the African Union and Economic Community of West African States, and existing strategies such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development. She advocated: engagement with civil society; strengthening the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding; and a global forest forum.

MOZAMBIQUE urged delegates to design a future arrangement that will improve implementation and address institutional weaknesses, the inadequate international legal framework, and lack of human and financial resources. Noting his country's implementation efforts, he urged UNFF to assist countries in improving domestic legal frameworks and in implementing programmes with immediate impact.

INDONESIA noted its work on decentralization, protected areas and national parks and called for institutional capacity, financial resources, and human capital to meet the challenges of sustainable forest management (SFM). He called for a high-level international arrangement on forests (IAF) to play a central role in catalyzing regional cooperation on implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action (PfAs), such as through partnership and governance initiatives. He supported financially strengthening the CPF, increasing official development assistance (ODA) in the context of forest development and the MDGs, and innovative financing such as a GEF forest fund. He said regional processes should utilize existing UN regional commissions and development institutions.

ARGENTINA favored a legal system, preferably binding, for forest protection, noting that such a system should respect national sovereignty, reflect common but differentiated responsibilities and ensure developing countries' capacity for forest protection and sustainable management. He recommended leaving open the option of establishing an LBI in the future.

BRAZIL rejected proposals for an LBI, quantifiable targets, and a voluntary code of conduct, and stressed the importance of the non-binding Forest Principles and Chapter 11 of Agenda 21. He said a future IAF should center on a strengthened UNFF and pursue, *inter alia*: financial resources channeled through a global forest fund; national policies to promote SFM; international cooperation, including South-South cooperation; capacity building; transfer of environmentally sound technology; stakeholder participation; criteria and indicators (C&I); and market transparency. He said an ideal outcome of UNFF-5 would strengthen existing instruments and ensure long-term political commitment.

The MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE said that global efforts should be



translated to regional, national and local levels. He stressed the value of regional cooperation, the role of national forest programmes (NFPs), the importance of linking SFM and the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) ecosystem approach, and the compatibility of ecological and economic priorities.

COLOMBIA rejected quantifiable goals, and said a strengthened IAF should eliminate the gap between dialogue and action. She stressed the need to, *inter alia*: pursue goals previously agreed to at other fora; implement actions that benefit indigenous peoples and local communities; hold regional meetings to facilitate national-level implementation; and ensure adequate means for implementation.

COSTA RICA said that the Central American Forest Strategy has been influential in improving NFPs, and emphasized that payments for ecological services should be viewed as an investment. KENYA called for a strengthened IAF and predictable funding to address obstacles to SFM. INDIA recommended further work to facilitate forest-related institutions, and stated that food security and health take precedence over NFP funding. He stated that developing an LBI is premature and that the focus should be on capacity building. MALAYSIA said the IAF should play a more significant role, assess the means of implementation for PfAs, and increase major group involvement.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), advocated strengthening the relationship between UNPFII and UNFF and ensuring full participation of indigenous peoples in decision making.

JAPAN stated that promotion of regional initiatives such as the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) is essential for achieving SFM. He said the AFP agreed to: harmonize existing initiatives to combat illegal logging; review measures for the rehabilitation of degraded lands; develop minimum standards of legality, timber tracking and chain of custody systems; and create a cooperative customs framework. He encouraged countries to establish a code as a means of strengthening political commitment to SFM.

The UK encouraged the development of clear objectives, building upon elements such as the CPF and CLIs, such as the Global Workshop on Forest Landscape Restoration Implementation.

NAMIBIA reported its progress in adopting C&I for SFM and developing its NFP, and noted that adoption of obligatory responsibilities needs to be matched by a financial mechanism. GUYANA, after expressing support for the statement made by the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization on Monday, noted major implementation shortcomings, and stated that any future IAF must address social issues and acknowledge regional initiatives. GABON highlighted the importance of debt relief for poor countries, and called for strengthening the IAF through precise objectives, clear deadlines, and permanent funding.

WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS stated that combating illegal logging must take precedence over free trade. She also pointed out that as long as social justice issues are ignored forests will remain at risk, and that any future arrangement must incorporate International Labour Organisation core labor standards.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES noted that constraints in stopping forest degradation include: lack of awareness of the IPF/IFF processes; insufficient research capacity in poor countries, including lack of access to data and research funding; and erosion of human resources due to HIV/AIDS. He recommended an international research management fund, funded by developing countries through external debt repayments and by developed countries according to their contributions to global warming, and low-interest loans from Bretton Woods institutions for research on PFA implementation.

FARMERS AND SMALL FOREST LANDOWNERS called for, *inter alia*, establishing clear ownership structures favoring family and community forest owners.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN called for transfer of knowledge to the younger generation. He advocated forests as a theme for

UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and strengthening the participation of youth partners for PFA implementation through fund-sharing.

NGOs favored addressing forests under the CBD. She criticized UNFF's promotion of monoculture forest plantations, including genetically modified species.

WOMEN said that, despite commitments made in 1992 and 2002, mainstreaming gender equity in the environmental sector has been fragmented, superficial and inconsistent. She called on a future IAF to ensure women are viewed as central to achieving SFM.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:** Delegates elected to the Bureau Simeon A. Adekanye (Nigeria) as Vice-Chair, to replace Francis K. Butagira (Uganda), who had to return home.

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL MINISTERIAL SEGMENT AND MSD:** Pekka Patosaari, Coordinator and Head of UNFF Secretariat, noted that the MSD and high-level ministerial segment will be held next week in conjunction with a discussion on future actions. He presented on linkages between forests and internationally agreed development goals (E.CN.18/2005/7), and identified key points, including that: ministers may consider setting clear objectives for future international forest policy; NFPs should identify the potential roles of forests in achieving MDGs; and attention should be given to finance, including ODA and mobilization of domestic resources for self-financing in the forest sector.

Chair Rodriguez stressed that the ministerial segment presents a valuable opportunity to send a strong message to the UN General Assembly, and invited delegates to present their views on the content of a ministerial declaration to emerge from UNFF-5.

LUXEMBOURG, on behalf of the EU, supported by the UK, stressed the importance of developing NFPs that reflect the linkages between forests and development. He called for agreement on a limited number of clear objectives and quantifiable targets linked to existing MDGs, encouraged CPF members to assist countries in developing such targets, and supported preparing a strong ministerial declaration reflecting these ideas.

IRAN underlined poverty and hunger as causes of logging and deforestation, and emphasized the role of an enabling environment, means of implementation, peace, good governance, and affordable environmentally sound technologies. He expressed doubt that a ministerial declaration could be negotiated, noting lack of capacity for two concurrent negotiations at UNFF-5. The US, supported by SWITZERLAND and CANADA, suggested that the ministerial declaration be based on the outcome of deliberations on a future IAF. She cautioned against negotiating text on linkages between forests and MDGs, noting the need for developing better understanding of this cross-sectoral issue.

CANADA drew attention to, *inter alia*, health impacts of air pollution caused by forest fires and tax-generated wealth from the forest industry. He expressed concern that decreased demand for SFM funding reflects a neglect of forests in national development agendas.

IRAN reiterated that it may be premature to draft the ministerial declaration. NORWAY suggested a two-step approach, establishing basic elements of the ministerial declaration prior to developing these further next week.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Some have noted that a consensus could be emerging regarding regional policy making and implementation in the future IAF, noting that there seems to be common interest in constituting a regional dimension in it. Some have suggested that housing regional decision making within the UN Economic Commissions could be more expedient than locating it elsewhere. Others note that given the complex array of existing regional processes, constituting a regional dimension to the future IAF could be tricky.