

**United Nations Forum on Forests
Bureau of the Eighth Session (UNFF8 Bureau)**

Minutes of the second meeting

Monday, 17 December 2007
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM
3:15 PM– 4:30PM
UN Forum on Forests Secretariat
One UN Plaza, DC 1 – 1235, New York

Participation

Bureau members: Dr. Boen M. Purnama, Mr. Arvids Ozols, Mr. Abdellah Benmellouk, and Dr. Glen Kile. Mr. Modesto Fernandez Diaz sent his regrets.

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Pekka Patosaari, Mr. Mahendra Joshi, Mr. Peter Csoka, Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill, Ms. Afsa Kemitale and Ms. Catalina Santamaria.

Others: Ms. Sri Murniningtyas, Ministry of Forestry, Indonesia, and Mr. Landry Subianto of the Indonesian Mission.

The agenda of the second meeting of the Bureau was the following:

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda
2. Actions to facilitate the nomination of the Bureau member from the WEOG Group
3. General review of the resumed session of the ECOSOC
4. The adoption of the NLBI and the special event at the General Assembly
5. Preparations for the eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests
6. Other matters

The Bureau meeting was held in two parts, from 9:00 to 11:30 AM and then from 3:15 to 4:30 PM in order to attend the General Assembly special event (12:00 – 1:00 PM) as described in the agenda item 4 below.

1. General introduction and adoption of agenda

Dr. Purnama, Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the UNFF8 Bureau. He informed members that despite the travel support provided to him by the Secretariat, Mr. Modesto Fernandez Diaz could not participate at this meeting, due to unforeseen transit visa-related problems. Dr. Purnama informed the Bureau that Dr. Glen Kile had been recently nominated as Bureau member representing the Western Europe and Other States Group (WEOG) and arrived to participate in the meeting.

A brief introduction of the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat was made. Then the Bureau adopted the provisional agenda, with an additional point, under item 6, "Other Matters" concerning the letter from the ECOSOC President to the Bureau Chair.

2. Actions to facilitate the nomination of a Bureau member from WEOG

The Bureau expressed its satisfaction for having the full bureau eventually and welcomed Dr. Glen Kile to the UNFF 8 Bureau as the representative of WEOG. Dr. Kile expressed his readiness to work in close cooperation with all members of the Bureau

3. General review of the resumed session of the ECOSOC

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the ECOSOC informal consultations held in September and October 2007 in relation to the UNFF7 report and associated programme budget implications (PBI) issues. On the invitation by the President of ECOSOC, Mr. Hans Hoogeveen facilitated the informal consultations. After a series of informal consultations and some amendments in the draft ECOSOC resolution on the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests (NLBI), the resumed session of ECOSOC on 17 October adopted the UNFF7 report including the resolution on NLBI (resolution, E/2007/L.39). It also addressed the strengthening of the Secretariat, within existing resources, as well as through increased voluntary extrabudgetary funds. In response to the request made by the Bureau, at the first Bureau meeting, ECOSOC also adopted a second resolution, E/2007/L.41, to provide travel support from the UNFF trust fund to Bureau members from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, for participation at its meetings. The Bureau expressed satisfaction at the adoption of the resolutions.

The Secretariat explained the nature and limitations of the Trust Fund, in particular a need for designated funds for supporting travel of bureau members to the bureau meetings, as per the new ECOSOC resolution. Mr. Patosaari called upon the Bureau to support the Secretariat and to urge members States to contribute to the Trust Fund in order to effectively implement the provisions of above resolutions.

4. The adoption of the NLBI and the special event at the GA

The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the programme of the General Assembly (GA) Special Event to commemorate the adoption of the Non Legally Binding Instrument on all types of Forests. The Bureau expressed its appreciation to the General Assembly President and the Secretariat for organizing the special event to commemorate the adoption of the NLBI by the General Assembly. It also reviewed and agreed to its content of the draft statement of Mr. Purnama for the event.

The Special Event would be followed by a reception hosted by the Governments of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

5. Preparations for the eighth session of the UN Forum on Forests

The Secretariat presented a preliminary comprehensive roadmap indicating critical activities and deadlines. It contained detailed planning of the main activities for the preparations of UNFF8 from December 2007 to April/May 2008, including the Secretary General's Reports and the ad hoc expert group on finance, as well as the planned activities of the CPF and its members, country and region led initiatives in support of the UNFF and other related events (e.g. CSD-16).

In light of the ECOSOC resolution adopting the UNFF7 report and the PBI outcome, the expert-level consultation meetings as previously proposed at the first meeting of the Bureau would not be convened. Instead, preparation of the S-G's reports on the UNFF8 agenda items under "Forest in a Changing Environment" would be done in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions and other members of the CPF. Further discussions on modality of collaboration will be made during the CPF retreat, scheduled towards the end of February 2008 in Nairobi.

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for preparing the roadmap and requested the Secretariat to revise the roadmap with explanatory note and circulate it among the Bureau members. The Bureau expressed a need for identifying a potential date for the AHEG, in view of documentation needs and logistical arrangements. The Bureau invited the Secretariat to propose different dates for the proposed country-led Initiatives (CLI) on finance, to be co-sponsored by the US and Netherlands. It also requested the Secretariat to propose dates for the next Bureau meeting, taking into consideration adequate planning time needed for Bureau members when preparing their travel to attend future meetings. The Bureau also favoured holding meetings on the side lines of a CLI meeting and the AHEG meeting, as well as video conferences as needed.

The Secretariat then briefed the Bureau on the planned country- and region-led Initiatives (CLI and RLI). As regards the preparations for the CLI on finance, the Bureau took note of the planned meeting with representatives of the Netherlands and the US on 18 December, which would provide an opportunity to discuss this matter further and to receive information from the co-sponsors. The Bureau was also briefed about another meeting scheduled on 18 December with the CPF members to form an advisory group in the preparations for the Ad hoc Expert Group on Finance. The Bureau noted the significance of the finance issue for UNFF8 and advised the Secretariat to take a lead in the forest finance discussions. The Bureau members also agreed to attend the relevant meetings.

The CLI on Decentralization and Forest Governance, co-sponsored by the Governments of South Africa and Switzerland would be convened in Durban, South Africa on 8-11 April 2008. The meeting would focus mainly on Africa and encourage participation by countries from both Francophone and Anglophone regions of Africa. Non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders would also be invited to the meeting. Financing has been provided by various donors. CIFOR would prepare background papers.

A "Region-Led Initiative (RLI)" co-sponsored by the Governments of Australia and Switzerland on Regional Input to UNFF would be held in Geneva from 28-30 January 2008. Invitation letters have been sent out by the governments of Australia and Switzerland giving priority to regional and sub-regional entities. The scope of the RLI is to promote and stimulate the contribution and participation of forest-related regional and sub-regional mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes in the UNFF's work with a view to contribute to the achievement of sustainable forest management (SFM) in the regions. In response to a request of the co-sponsors, the Bureau decided that Mr. Abdellah Benmellouk would participate in the Steering Group and the RLI meeting on its behalf.

6. Other matters

Fundraising for the UNFF Trust Fund: The Secretariat reiterated the importance of sustained and predictable contributions to its trust fund, and urged the Bureau for its support to ensure that the Trust Fund could deliver as expected. Due to the limited resources available from the regular budget the money from the Trust Fund had to continuously cover temporary staffing and travel support for representatives from developing country and countries with economies in transition to attend Forum sessions and AHEG meetings. With the new ECOSOC resolution on travel support to the Bureau members, the trust fund would further need contributions from donors. The Bureau noted the need for additional funding for the successful preparations for the AHEG and UNFF8 meetings, and assured of its efforts to approach prospective donors.

Staffing: The Bureau took note of the current serious staffing situation of the Secretariat including the upcoming retirement of Director, Mr. Patosaari on 31 December, and the discontinuation of secondments. Out of the traditional three organizations providing secondments (FAO, ITTO and UNEP), so far only ITTO had indicated a possibility to continue providing a secondment to the UNFF Secretariat.

“Forest Day” event during the UNFCCC COP-13: The Secretariat briefed this special event in Bali, organized by CPF members including the UNFF Secretariat on 8 December 2007. Attended by more than 800 people, including scientists, policymakers and representatives from various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, it provided a platform for multi-stakeholder discussion to help shape the global forest agenda in the context of the critical role forests play in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The event was attended by Chairman, Mr. Purnama, who highlighted the importance of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests. The Bureau was pleased with the successful outcome of this event. The Bureau decided to send a letter to CIFOR thanking it for coordinating this important event at UNFCCC. The Bureau also noted the growing importance of forests in the UNFCCC discussions and developments related to reduction of emission due to deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).

Letter from the ECOSOC President to the Bureau Chair: The Bureau Chairman has been invited to participate in a meeting between the ECOSOC Bureau and chairmen of functional commissions, which would be held in New York on 29 January 2008. The Bureau welcomed such an invitation and opportunity to interact with ECOSOC. It thus decided that Chair should participate in the meeting to inform ECOSOC on what the Forum has been doing and contributing to deliberations on the ECOSOC agenda.

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Purnama thanked the Bureau members and the Secretariat for their active participation in the meeting. Mr. Purnama particularly recognized the significant contribution of Mr. Patosaari to the UNFF in the past several years. Mr. Purnama and other Bureau members thanked him for his dedication, commitment to SFM and remarkable leadership of the UNFF Secretariat. They all wished him the best in his retirement phase. The meeting was concluded at 4:30 pm.