

International forest policy dialogue

In the years following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), ongoing and often intensive international debate on forest policy issues has taken place. However, the significant contribution that forests make to the health of the planet and its inhabitants is now undisputed, securing their place on the international agenda for some time to come. With the establishment of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), attention can now turn to putting words into practice, moving from negotiated text to action on the ground. This transition, however, is marked by challenges as the global community seeks to resolve difficult and complex problems in such areas as financing, trade, capacity building, the transfer of environmentally sound technology and future international arrangements.

The global forest policy dialogue can strengthen political will, catalyse action and mobilize financial resources, particularly if it takes full account of links with other sectors through integrated approaches and effective partnerships. Ultimately, however, success will be measured by the degree to which countries implement commitments they have made in international fora. While progress is encouraging, there is concern that forest issues are becoming increasingly politicized and that substantive discussions are being overtaken by procedural matters.

This chapter summarizes the results of the first and second sessions of UNFF, describes the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the CPF Network, explores the relationship between the global policy debate on sustainable forest management and forest biological diversity, and provides updates on international conventions and agreements concerning forests. The role of the new National Forest Programme

Facility in bringing about positive change with regard to capacity building, information sharing and knowledge management is also underscored. In conclusion, the chapter highlights the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) – the Johannesburg Declaration and the Plan of Implementation – which affirm that sustainable forest management is essential to the achievement of sustainable development in developed and developing countries alike.

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS

In October 2000, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) established UNFF to carry out functions related to the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest, including elements contained in the UNCED Forest Principles and in the outputs of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) (ECOSOC, 2000). In this regard, UNFF has the following tasks:

- facilitating and promoting the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;
- providing a forum for continued policy development and dialogue;
- enhancing cooperation as well as policy and programme coordination;
- fostering cooperation at the national, regional and global levels;
- monitoring and assessing progress and, on this basis, considering what future action is needed;
- strengthening political commitment.

In 2005, UNFF will consider the parameters of a mandate to develop a legal framework covering all types of forest. At the moment,

however, it is focusing on issues related to financial and technological support for implementing sustainable forest management.

First session: June 2001, New York

During the first session, governments emphasized the significance of UNFF as the central intergovernmental forum to deliberate international policy, and welcomed the establishment of CPF (see p. 44). After two weeks of intensive negotiations, it adopted a Multi-Year Programme of Work and a Plan of Action for implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action (ECOSOC, 2001).

Second session: March 2002, New York

During the high-level segment at the second session, ministers responsible for forests underscored the role of UNFF as the primary forum for international forest policy deliberations. In their declaration, they invited

WSSD to advance sustainable forest management in response to critical issues, such as the position of forests on national and international political agendas; the lack of financing; the need for collaboration with other sectors; and attention to enhancing the conservation, protection and use of forests. This first ministerial segment also included a dialogue with heads of CPF members on their role and commitment to implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and a multistakeholder dialogue to discuss the contributions of non-governmental groups to implementation of these proposals (ECOSOC, 2002).

In accordance with UNFF's programme of work, the main outcomes focused on lessons learned and future steps with regard to:

- combating deforestation and forest degradation;
- conserving and protecting unique types of forest and fragile ecosystems;

Canadian Environmental Network identifies IPF/IFF priorities for implementation in Canada

The Forest Caucus of the Canadian Environmental Network consists of more than 100 environmental NGOs. As part of consultations for UNFF-2, Natural Resources Canada funded a workshop at which the Forest Caucus analysed and prioritized the IPF and IFF proposals for action for implementation in Canada. The group ranked those of greatest interest in terms of opportunities for new commitments and any additional effort required. On this basis, the group's priorities are:

- a national forest programme that incorporates the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and values;
- policies and mechanisms to reform forest tenure, including access to and use of forest resources by local and indigenous communities;
- data collection on the value of all forest goods and services and on the environmental and social impact of changes in forest use;

- integrated national policies, economic instruments and mechanisms to support sustainable forest management and to address deforestation and forest degradation;
- the establishment of a network of representative protected areas;
- forest-related international development assistance to support bottom-up, participatory approaches to forest management;
- transparent international trade negotiations that are accountable to civil society;
- forest revenue collection systems and examination of the relationship of land tenure with deforestation and forest degradation.

The Canadian Environmental Network is now developing a work plan to present to the National Forest Strategy Coalition as it prepares Canada's National Forest Strategy for the period 2003 to 2008.

- rehabilitating and restoring degraded lands and promoting natural and planted forests;
- concepts, terms and definitions.

Agreement was also reached on criteria for reviewing the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of UNFF in 2005.

Despite its best efforts, however, UNFF-2 was unable to agree on terms of reference for ad hoc expert groups on three subjects: monitoring, assessment and reporting; the financing and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and the parameters of a mandate to develop a legal framework covering all types of forest. Discussions will continue at UNFF-3, from 26 May to 6 June 2003, in Geneva, Switzerland.

Looking back and moving forward

Since UNCED, the international policy dialogue has brought forest issues to the forefront and raised awareness of the significant contributions that forests make to the health of the planet and its inhabitants. In addition to environmental services, their roles in sustaining livelihoods, contributing to food security and reducing poverty are increasingly being recognized.

IPF and IFF provided the forest community with an opportunity to build trust, confidence and consensus in the aftermath of the polarized debate of more than ten years ago. With a firm commitment to move from dialogue to action, UNFF is embarking on the next critical phase. While translating words into practice remains a constant challenge, current trends on the ground are encouraging. For example:

- more than 100 countries have revised national forest policies and developed national forest programmes, taking into account the need for wide participation and linkages with other sectors;
- 150 countries are involved in international initiatives concerning criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;
- areas under official forest management plans have increased to 88 percent in developed countries and some 6 percent in developing countries (FAO, 2001);

- 10 percent of the world's forests now fall within protected forest areas (FAO, 2001);
- the involvement of local communities in forest planning and management is growing.

Now that UNFF has met twice, it should be in a better position to allow for rich exchanges of experience on implementing proposals for action so that countries can learn from one another. UNFF therefore has significant potential for developing solutions, generating strong political commitment and strengthening partnerships.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ON FORESTS

CPF was launched in April 2001 to support the work of UNFF and to enhance cooperation and coordination among CPF members on forest-related issues. It was created in response to an invitation from ECOSOC to the heads of relevant organizations, institutions and instruments at the time UNFF was established in October 2000. CPF is chaired by FAO and serviced by the Secretariat of UNFF.

Based on the high-level, informal Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests which supported IPF and IFF, CPF continues the tradition of teamwork through an informal and voluntary arrangement. Where the mandates of individual organizations are complementary, members collaborate on specific activities related to the work of UNFF.

CPF reports annually to UNFF on its progress and plans, with a document entitled *CPF framework to support the work of the UNFF*. While CPF takes into account the guidance it receives from UNFF, each member is accountable to its own governing body with regard to priority activities, work programmes and budget expenditure. If the partnership is to function effectively, it is therefore critical for national governments, through their various ministries, to send consistent messages to the governing bodies of all member organizations concerning their involvement in and contribution to CPF.

The notion of teamwork and comparative advantage is relatively new in the global arena, and the forest sector is leading the way in many respects. Major intergovernmental fora, including WSSD and the sixth Conference of the Parties

(COP-6) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (see p. 49), are taking note of CPF's achievements and are making reference to it in some of their decisions. In addition to the CPF Framework, CPF produced a policy document outlining its objectives and operating modalities. It also supported a number of country-led initiatives and established a focal agency system to carry out joint responsibilities and activities, all within one year of its establishment.

CPF acts as a catalyst for national, regional and international action, provides expertise and information, strengthens political commitment, mobilizes financial resources and networks with a wide range of partners.

CPF Network

Membership of CPF is limited by design, to enable it to work effectively and flexibly. However, members clearly recognize the important contributions that a variety of groups make to sustainable forest management through their experience, resources and perspectives, which have enriched the intergovernmental forest policy dialogue to date. To capitalize on these, CPF has established the informal CPF Network, which seeks to involve a broad range of stakeholders in order to enhance CPF's work in supporting UNFF, in particular the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Additional key functions include strengthening communication among stakeholders and further enhancing collaboration and cooperation among organizations, institutions, instruments and processes working on forest-related matters. The inaugural meeting was held in March 2002. Sessions are organized, as far as possible, on the margins of major international forest gatherings.

More information on CPF and the CPF Network is available on the Internet at www.un.org/esa/sustdev/unffcpf.htm.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY DEBATE ON FORESTS AND FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Forest ecosystems are major reservoirs of biological diversity, supporting 50 to 70 percent of the world's terrestrial species, according to

CPF members

- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
- World Bank
- World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Examples of areas in which CPF members are collaborating

- National forest programmes
- International criteria and indicators processes
- Activities to combat illegal logging
- Guidelines on reduced-impact logging
- Local communities' participation in fire management
- Capacity building and policy development
- Protection of unique types of forest and fragile ecosystems in more than 50 countries
- Assistance to low forest cover countries within the Tehran Process
- Data and information on forests
- Projections and outlook studies
- Guidelines for monitoring, assessing and reporting on forests
- Inputs to the reports of the UN Secretary-General to UNFF
- Secondment of senior professionals to the UNFF Secretariat

some estimates. Natural forests in the tropics are the richest in biological diversity, but are also the most threatened by deforestation and forest degradation. Increased awareness of potentially considerable losses of forest biological diversity has led to growing demands for international and national regulatory mechanisms, principles and guidelines to reverse this trend.

The forest community has long recognized the need to enhance forest resources and conserve biological diversity in forest ecosystems. This is shown, for example, by the work of some 150 countries within the nine international processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, which all consider the conservation of biological diversity an essential and integral element of sustainability.

CBD and UNFF are two separate but parallel processes dealing with forests and forest biological diversity. The former addresses the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, including those from forest ecosystems, while the latter looks at the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests on the basis of the outcomes of UNCED, IPF and IFF. Both consider their roles complementary and recognize the need to strengthen collaboration. Other international and regional bodies deal with various aspects of forest biological diversity as well, including FAO, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), by supporting country activities and linking policy debate to implementation on the ground.

IPF/IFF/UNFF and forest biodiversity

The main purpose of IPF (1995–1997) and IFF (1997–2000) was to build consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest, using the

UNCED Forest Principles and Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 (“Combating deforestation”) as a basis for deliberations. IPF recognized that sustainably managed forests play a valuable part in conserving biological diversity, as reflected in the large number of proposals for action that either directly or indirectly address this issue.

In 2000, after five years of ad hoc discussions, ECOSOC established UNFF to continue policy development, coordinate forest-related action, enhance international collaboration and facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action (see p. 42).

Development of the forest component in CBD

Although many articles of CBD apply to forest ecosystems, the convention itself does not make specific mention of forests. Discussions on the conservation of forest biological diversity within CBD first started at COP-2, in November 1995. A year later, COP-3 recommended that CBD develop a work programme in this regard. At the same time, it also discussed developing a protocol that could obviate the need for a global forest convention, a controversial issue debated by IPF and later by IFF, on which consensus could not be reached.

In 1998, COP-4 adopted the CBD Work Programme for Forest Biological Diversity, which focused on research, cooperation and technology development. It established an ad hoc technical expert group on forest biological diversity to make further progress on the issues.

COP-6, held in April 2002, significantly increased the scope of CBD forest-related activities by adopting an expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity – described in the section on forest-related conventions (see p. 49).

Shift from conservation to management within CBD

Since COP-4 identified forest biological diversity as one of its five thematic areas, it has been a significant part of the agenda of CBD. Recently, other aspects of forests have been added, including the harvesting of wood and non-wood forest products (NWFPs), illegal logging and

forest fires. CBD thus appears to be focusing increasingly on the management and use of forest resources rather than on biological diversity in forest ecosystems *per se*.

In the course of this process, the debate has at times been confusing. For example, the use of such terms in COP-6 documents as “harvesting of forest biodiversity”, “management of forest biological diversity” and “forest biodiversity products” leaves the impression that diversity is synonymous with resources. This is clearly not the case, inasmuch as resources are managed and harvested, and products are obtained from the resources. More important, CBD seems to be moving far away from its own definition of biological diversity as “the variability among living organisms”.

Another shift is the increasing reliance of parties on international organizations to support implementation of decisions and to assist with national reporting. There are growing expectations that CPF assume a larger role in this regard, a trend that has also emerged in UNFF deliberations.

Role of CPF

As already noted, CPF was established to support the work of UNFF and to enhance collaboration among its members on forest-related issues. Consistent with this mandate, UNFF invited CPF to support its Multi-Year Programme of Work and Plan of Action, especially with regard to implementing the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Soon after, COP-6 to CBD invited CPF to support the expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity.

While CPF is a voluntary partnership that receives guidance from UNFF, it is not an implementing agency, as CPF members operate individually under their own mandates, work programmes and budgets, which are approved by their respective governing bodies. Still CPF members can act as catalysts in countries to help implement sustainable forest management. They and other international and bilateral organizations can provide assistance and technical support, help raise awareness of needs, advise on strategies and help build capacity and

partnerships. However, it is up to countries to conserve forest biological diversity at the national level, as no outside organization can undertake this, any more than it can halt deforestation.

The Secretariat of CBD is the focal agency within CPF for forest-related traditional knowledge. COP-6 called on the CBD Secretariat to facilitate the coordination and cooperation of CPF members in implementing the CBD expanded programme of work and the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to forest biological diversity. It also urged CPF to consider the CBD Secretariat as the focal point for forest biological diversity and CPF accepted this request.

The ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management

Amid growing confusion, calls are being made to clarify the relationship between an ecosystem approach on the one hand, and sustainable forest management on the other. In essence, while there are both differences and similarities, they are mutually supportive rather than contradictory concepts, with sustainable forest management encompassing the principles of the ecosystem approach.

Sustainable forest management refers to meeting present needs for forest goods and services, while ensuring their continued availability in the long term. The concept combines the production of wood and NWFPs with the conservation of soil, water and biological diversity, while the socio-economic, cultural and spiritual values of forests are maintained or enhanced. The conservation of biological diversity thus constitutes an essential and integral element of sustainable forest management, as recognized in all international criteria and indicators processes.

CBD defines the ecosystem approach as the integrated management of land, water and living resources, which promotes their conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Accordingly, forest ecosystems should be managed for their intrinsic values and for the tangible benefits they provide to humans.

Challenges of international debate on forests and forest biological diversity

Some concern has been expressed over the overlap and possible duplication in UNFF and CBD activities. One reason for these shortcomings may be that the forest community is not reaching out enough to other sectors – including the environment sector, which is the most closely involved in CBD – to facilitate a constructive policy dialogue. Industry and socio-economic groups, for example those representing labour, local communities and indigenous people, have also indicated that they do not feel sufficiently engaged. Another reason may be that some deem CBD to have a higher status than UNFF. However, while CBD is legally binding, its work programmes are not. In this regard, they have the same status as the IPF/IFF proposals for action and UNFF decisions.

CBD has generally acknowledged the work of IPF, IFF and UNFF, but it is worrying to note that in the CBD negotiations there seems to be a lack of knowledge of post-UNCED forest discussions and follow-up action at the international, regional and national levels. Awareness of work carried out by international organizations such as FAO, ITTO and CIFOR also appears to be lacking, even though efforts of these organizations in pursuit of sustainable forest management have entailed an ecosystem approach over the years.

All post-UNCED fora emphasize a move from dialogue to action. However, neither UNFF nor CBD has time-bound commitments or targets in its programme of work, and difficult negotiations are beginning to reflect a North/South divide again. Both fora spend considerable time on procedural matters – for example on debating whether to establish expert groups. CBD recently established another expert group on forest biological diversity, following the termination of the first, whereas UNFF must continue to discuss terms of reference for three groups on various aspects of sustainable forest management.

National reporting is yet another sensitive issue in both fora, because although it provides a

means of evaluating progress, it also places a significant burden on countries. In this regard, UNFF recently invited CPF to propose ways of streamlining forest-related reporting to international organizations and bodies.

Lack of resources and insufficient capacity for implementing action proposals is a reality of CBD and UNFF (as for many other fora). Neither has the means to carry out action apart from supporting information exchange and further dialogue. Indirectly, CBD has access to funds from GEF, and in 2001, forests were the subject of 80 projects – worth more than US\$500 million – in its biological diversity portfolio.

Action by countries in response to CBD and UNFF commitments needs to be coordinated and mutually supportive. Integration of the 130 activities in the CBD expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity with the more than 270 IPF/IFF proposals for action constitutes a major challenge. Both CBD and UNFF encourage a cross-sectoral approach to national implementation through existing frameworks: UNFF through national forest programmes and CBD through national biological diversity strategies and action plans. Nevertheless, according to a study commissioned by the Global Forest Coalition (2002), by March 2002 virtually no integration had taken place.

While enhancing cooperation, coordination and synergy is among the main functions of UNFF, international discussions on forests seem to be increasingly fragmented. As CBD moves beyond its initial focus on conservation to issues related to resource management, there is considerable concern that other bodies, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), may also wish to take a leading role on forest issues, notably those concerning reforestation and rehabilitation, trade and sustainable forest management. If they do so without considering activities that are being undertaken by mandated bodies, this will lead to confusion and wasteful duplication, and it could be counterproductive.

Ways forward

UNFF is relatively young, as is the CBD expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity, and the effectiveness of both to guide action has still to be seen. What are required now are innovative approaches, effective support, and collaboration and coordination among partners. Governments need to stress this message when giving advice to governing bodies.

Recognizing that their work programmes are separate but complementary, the secretariats of UNFF and CBD are working together to identify common areas for action, with a view to avoiding duplication. Such efforts are consistent with the recommendations made by COP-6 to CBD and the Workshop on Forests and Biological Diversity held in Accra, Ghana in January 2002 (UNEP/CBD, 2002). CPF members are also collaborating to support both processes.

Perhaps countries should then agree on one joint programme of work that assembles these common elements, and they should ensure effective coordination and implementation at the national level, where responsibility for action

lies. An example of this type of process is in place at the regional level in Europe, where the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and the pan-European ministerial process "Environment for Europe" jointly developed and adopted a work programme that defines shared objectives and actions in the field of biological diversity as essential elements of sustainable forest management. This could well serve as a model.

UPDATE ON FOREST-RELATED INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

Convention on Biological Diversity

COP-6 was held in The Hague, the Netherlands from 7 to 19 April 2002. Among other decisions, it agreed on an expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity composed of three elements: conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing; an enabling institutional and socio-economic environment; and knowledge, assessment and monitoring. It also refers to the more specific issues of strategies on *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, sustainable resource use, the

Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

The Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe will be held in Vienna, Austria from 28 to 30 April 2003. At that time, 43 European countries, the European Community and 42 observer countries and organizations will reaffirm commitments made at previous ministerial conferences and report on their implementation. Reports will also be presented on the state of forests in Europe and on action taken at the national and pan-European levels. Participants will also discuss adoption of the Vienna Declaration, drafted as a strong and balanced political statement on the sustainable management of European forests. Additional agenda items include:

- pan-European priorities for forest biological diversity, tak-

ing into account the CBD expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity and the UNFF Multi-Year Programme of Work and Plan of Action;

- topics related to economically viable sustainable forest management, such as enabling conditions for activities and investment, the promotion and marketing of forest products and services, and labour issues;
- climate change and sustainable forest management, including the role of bioenergy and the use of wood products as a substitute for non-renewable resources;
- cultural aspects as an integral component of sustainable forest management.

need to establish, evaluate and strengthen protected area networks, forest law enforcement, national coordination and the need to facilitate the participation of local and indigenous communities in the management of protected areas.

COP-6 stressed urgent action to safeguard forests that are threatened and/or that can contribute to conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing. It highlighted the need to consider forest biological diversity in programmes concerning global forest resources assessments, forest fires, climate change and pollution abatement. It also noted the importance of linking forest biological diversity conservation with work on alien species.

During the high-level segment, ministers resolved to "strengthen efforts to put in place measures to halt biodiversity loss, which is taking place at an alarming rate, at the global, regional, subregional and national levels, by the year 2010" (CBD, 2002).

COP-6 recognized that implementation of the work programme should be based on national priorities and needs. In particular, it emphasized the need for the Secretariat of CBD and parties to it to cooperate with UNFF, CPF and their partners to ensure better implementation of

common objectives contained in national forest programmes and national biological diversity strategies and action plans. It requested that FAO, in collaboration with international and national partners, continue its work on forest-related concepts, terms and definitions.

COP-6 requested the Executive Secretary of CBD to establish an ad hoc technical expert group to review progress on the work programme, and recognized that new and additional financial resources were necessary for its implementation.

Further information on the decisions and the Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity can be found on the Internet at www.biodiv.org/meetings/cop-06.asp.

Convention to Combat Desertification

In October 2001, 176 countries attended COP-5 to the Convention to Combat Desertification in Geneva, Switzerland. Building on previous sessions that focused on negotiating priorities and determining future action, this session turned its attention to issues of implementation.

One of the key decisions was the establishment of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to assist the Conference of the Parties in determining progress and proposing future action. Deliberations began at its first session in November 2002. Agreement was also reached to increase resources to the secretariat and to the Global Mechanism for 2002–2003.

With regard to addressing the devastating impact of land degradation in terms of lost income and lost productive land, participants welcomed the May 2001 decision of the council of GEF to pursue the designation of land degradation as a focal area. Such support then paved the way for the assembly to consider this focal area in October 2002. Consistent with the urgent need to raise awareness of this issue, COP-5 also gave the Committee on Science and Technology the priority task of examining how to address land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation in an integrated fashion.

Many governments have prepared National Action Programmes to reverse desertification.

A fifth regional annex to the Convention to Combat Desertification

Regional implementation annexes to the Convention to Combat Desertification provide details on how to prepare and carry out national, subregional and regional action programmes. A fifth regional annex for Central and Eastern Europe, adopted in 2000, entered into force in September 2001, complementing the four annexes for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Northern Mediterranean.

This is a significant step, enabling affected countries to inform partners about their efforts to combat land degradation and about their requirements for international support.

Further information on the Convention to Combat Desertification can be found on the Internet at www.unccd.int/main.php.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol

COP-8 to UNFCCC was held in New Delhi, India from 23 October to 1 November 2002. After three years of intense negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol, and with the signing of the Marrakech Accord in November 2001, discussions are moving from the establishment of rules for implementation to implementation itself. By 1 August 2002, 76 countries had ratified the Kyoto Protocol, 22 of which are from the industrialized world and responsible for 36 per cent of that group's 1990 carbon dioxide emissions. When this figure increases to 55 per cent, the protocol will enter into force.

An account of recent developments in the forest sector in the context of climate change is given on p. 25. Documents and decisions reached at COP-8 are on the Internet at www.unfccc.org.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

COP-12 to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) took place in November 2002 in Santiago, Chile. One of the key items discussed was the CITES lists, or Appendices, which come up for review every two and a half years. Appendix I prohibits commercial trade in some 900 species threatened with extinction, while Appendix II regulates trade in 4 000 animal and more than 22 000 plant species through a system

of permits. Member governments submitted more than 50 proposed amendments, including one to list bigleaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) in Appendix II. The results of their deliberations can be found on the Internet at www.cites.org/eng/cop/index.shtml.

COP-12 also considered reports from two working groups that were established at COP-11: one on mahogany and one on bushmeat. Among other items, the former addressed the effectiveness of current and potential Appendix III listings, provided an analysis of legal and illegal trade and reported on the status of the species in tropical America. The working group on bushmeat, established to address the unsustainable hunting of wild animals for their meat, especially in Africa (see p. 24), reported on factors contributing to the bushmeat crisis and suggested ways in which the international community might deal with the problem. National legal reform and harmonization of laws among countries were viewed as important elements in the solution.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Unlike most other environmental treaties, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is not part of the



Bigleaf mahogany (Swietenia macrophylla), shown here in Mexico, was included in Appendix II of CITES at COP-12 in November 2002

UN system. However, its bureau, housed at the headquarters of IUCN in Gland, Switzerland, has formally established collaborative agreements with a number of secretariats and with a wide range of partners. In fact, the Ramsar Convention has long paved the way for multistakeholder projects and activities around the world, and is recognized as a leader in this regard.

Six workshops were held in 2001 and 2002 in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Neotropics (Central and South America and the Caribbean), North America and Oceania to review progress and challenges in implementing the convention and to prepare for COP-8, which took place in November 2002 in Valencia, Spain. Discussions at these workshops helped to shape the agenda for technical sessions of COP-8, encompassing the following issues:

- major challenges and emerging opportunities for wetlands, water and sustainability;
- baselines for sustainable use – wetland inventory and assessment;
- global biological diversity and sustenance of human life – the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance;
- management of wetlands for sustainable use and human well-being;

- cultural aspects of wetlands as a tool for their conservation and sustainable use.

Further information on the Ramsar Convention, including decisions taken at COP-8 can be found on the Internet at www.ramsar.org.

International Tropical Timber Agreement

The International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) came into force on 1 January 1997 and expires on 31 December 2003, unless it is extended for a second of two possible three-year periods. ITTO is at present considering this option. In May 2002, membership of ITTO consisted of 31 producer countries and 25 consumer countries, in addition to the European Community.

The ITTO Objective 2000 continues to be an important focus, with all members working towards ensuring that their exports of tropical timber and timber products come from sustainably managed sources. ITTO has reaffirmed its full commitment in this regard and is assisting countries to move as fast as possible in this direction. Indeed, such efforts are central to ITTO's work, as reflected in the six major goals identified in its Action Plan 2002–2006:

TABLE 7
International criteria and indicators processes

Region	Countries		International/ecoregional processes or initiatives
	Total countries in the region	Countries participating in one or more processes	
Africa	56	46	Near East; Dry-Zone Africa; African Timber Organization; ITTO
Asia	49	36	Near East; Dry Forests Asia; ITTO; Pan-European
Europe	40	40	Pan-European; Montreal; ITTO
North and Central America	34	11	Lepaterique; Montreal; ITTO
Oceania	20	5	Montreal; ITTO
South America	14	11	Tarapoto; ITTO; Montreal
Total	213	149	

Source: FAO, 2001.

- improved transparency of the international timber market;
- promotion of tropical timber from sustainably managed sources;
- support to activities that secure the tropical forest estate;
- promotion of the sustainable management of tropical forests;
- promotion of increased processing of tropical timber from sustainable sources;
- improved processing and use by industry of tropical timber from sustainable sources.

Activities and issues receiving special attention include: training in applying ITTO Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests; restoration, management and rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests; improved market access; means of assessing and combating illegal logging and illegal trade; encouragement of reduced-impact logging practices; forest certification; mangrove conservation and management; and the establishment and management of transboundary conservation areas. In addition, ITTO's first report on the state of tropical forest management will be published in 2003.

Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

Stakeholders at the international, regional, national and subnational levels increasingly acknowledge the importance of applying criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as tools to monitor the effects of intervention and to assess progress over time. Intergovernmental organizations and agencies as well as numerous international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are supporting the nine major international criteria and indicators processes, which involve nearly 150 countries and 85 percent of the world's forests (see Table 7). As might be expected with such extensive coverage, the degree of implementation varies considerably both among processes and among member countries within them. In this regard, it is encouraging to note that some processes, mainly the Pan-European,

Montreal and ITTO processes, are in the midst of issuing reports on the status of sustainable forest management in member countries. Other processes are also working towards this end.

While action was originally directed to the national level, efforts to develop and implement criteria and indicators at the forest management unit level have recently been intensified, with governments continuing to involve a range of partners, including forest owners, NGOs and the private sector.

Over the years, countries participating in the various processes have been validating regional-level criteria and indicators, with the aim of selecting, adapting and implementing those considered most applicable and relevant to their particular situations. In connection with this work, the processes that have most recently produced guidelines for assessing, monitoring and reporting on progress towards sustainable forest management are the Dry-Zone Africa, Dry Forests in Asia and Near East Processes.

Challenges for the future include:

- strengthening political support for sustainable forest management;
- attracting more countries into the international criteria and indicators processes;
- improving the common understanding of concepts, terms and definitions;
- validating and adopting dynamic sets of relevant, measurable and affordable indicators;
- implementing field-tested and nationally adjusted regional guidelines for measurement and monitoring;
- improving country capacity to collect, store, analyse, use and disseminate information concerning sustainable forest management;
- developing cost-effective but comprehensive formats to improve and streamline reporting;
- incorporating criteria and indicators into national forest programmes;
- linking the monitoring of indicators for sustainable forest management to global forest resources assessments;
- helping countries and the international community to streamline efforts and to ensure that initiatives in related areas, such

- as biological diversity, are complementary;
- supporting country efforts to secure adequate resources to carry out related work.

Along with others, FAO will continue to support international criteria and indicators processes, especially in developing countries as they move towards implementation. Assistance will be provided for validating criteria and indicators, particularly in countries with low forest cover, and for developing practical guidelines for assessment, monitoring and reporting. Efforts will also be made to encourage

countries that are not yet members of any process to begin work in this area.

Following a recommendation from the Expert Consultation on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Rome in November 2000, an International Conference on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management will be held in 2003. The Government of Guatemala will host the event, with the support of FAO and ITTO, in collaboration with the Governments of the United States and Finland. The main objectives

National forest programmes

Following forest discussions at the intergovernmental level, agreement was reached on a holistic, comprehensive and multisectoral approach to sustainable forest management through national forest programmes. The importance of forests to a wide range of stakeholders, because of the diversity of the goods and services that they provide, means that partnerships are a key element in the process. Implementation therefore draws largely on close collaboration at the national and international levels, taking full advantage of synergies and the comparative advantages of the various players. Based on experience over the past two decades, national forest programmes are bringing about positive changes with regard to:

- broadening stakeholders' involvement in all aspects of sustainable forest management;
- refining current knowledge and broadening access to it;
- improving the capacity of technical staff and civil society;
- fostering cross-sectoral linkages;
- improving access to financing.

Although policy and legal frameworks to increase multistakeholder participation have improved in recent years, institutional arrangements to facilitate such partnerships need to be refined in both developing and developed countries. Moreover, as knowledge becomes the driving force of modern society, mechanisms for its generation, dissemination and application need to be strengthened. Precisely for this reason, national forest programmes give particular attention to:

- bridging the knowledge divide through better sharing of information among partners, taking full advantage of new technologies;
- incorporating traditional knowledge and encouraging local innovation;
- networking to strengthen the national capacity to gain access to, adapt and apply new knowledge.

A similar philosophy underlies efforts to mobilize investments in forestry. With improved enabling conditions for sustainable forest management, stronger institutions and more predictable institutional arrangements, financial resources may become more readily available. However, if this is to happen, initial public investment is needed in order to encourage future private sector involvement, given that many constraints to sustainable forest management can be removed through modest support from the public sector. In addition, the right conditions could significantly enhance investment, especially by farmers, community groups and private investors, while improved partnerships among donors would help to avoid conflicting efforts and results.

Agencies and partners have formed the National Forest Programme Facility, hosted by FAO, and are supporting the Programme on Forests, hosted by the World Bank (see Box on p. 55). Through collaborative efforts, these two initiatives are expanding access to both knowledge and financing for sustainable forest management.

are to improve development and implementation of criteria and indicators, to foster political commitment, to strengthen institutional capacity and stakeholder participation, and to contribute to the work of UNFF.

Additional information on international processes concerning criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management can be found on the Internet at www.fao.org/forestry/crit-ind.

NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMME FACILITY

In many developing countries, the formulation and implementation of national forest programmes is hampered by a number of factors, including a lack of knowledge on how to address key obstacles to sustainable forest management, how to increase the forest sector's contribution to achieving broader development objectives, and how to create an enabling environment for forest sector development through effective forest policies. Weak national capacity for managing and implementing processes that are participatory, multisectoral and country-led is also problematic, as are issues related to governance, accountability and transparency of information.

The establishment of the National Forest Programme Facility is the result of intense collaboration among partner countries, FAO, the Programme on Forests (PROFOR), institutions from developing countries and NGOs in response to a call from the international forest community to consider national forest programmes as an important means of addressing key issues in a comprehensive and multisectoral manner.

The Facility focuses on information exchange, knowledge sharing and capacity building in order to ensure that the participation of the broad range of interest groups in national-level forest deliberations is meaningful. It differs from earlier project-funded assistance in that efforts are now geared to improving conditions that foster sustainable forest management. The Facility also seeks to link forest policy and planning with broader national objectives, strategies and programmes, particularly those

Programme on Forests

The Programme on Forests (PROFOR), recently transferred to the World Bank from UNDP as an element of its new forest policy and strategy, acts as a catalyst in developing new approaches and partnerships and in leveraging support for sustainable forest management initiatives. It analyses and generates knowledge on the implementation of national forest programmes and focuses on issues of common interest to particular countries, the World Bank and PROFOR donors.

The programme is divided into four areas:

- livelihoods;
- finance;
- governance;
- cross-sectoral analysis.

concerning poverty alleviation. Critical to its success is the development of partnerships among governments, civil society, the private sector, donors and NGOs in recipient countries.

Over a period of five years and at an estimated cost of US\$32 million, the Facility aims to support some 60 countries that are implementing national forest programmes.

Direct country-level support

The Facility will assist governments and civil society to enable them to manage and develop national forest programme processes. Support will vary from country to country, depending on the stage of development of each national forest programme, the extent to which the foundations for sustainable forest management have been laid, and the amount of support available from other sources. Country-level support is expected to improve:

- national capacity to manage the national forest programme process in a participatory

manner, including the participation of civil society, particularly so that forest-dependent people and other marginalized groups, such as the rural poor, can be heard;

- coherence and synergy with broader policy and planning processes, for example those concerning poverty alleviation, the environment and sustainable development in general;
- availability of and access to information and knowledge, for example on forest resources and their use, forest products, marketing and trade, the value of forest products and services, institutions, financing, forest-related agreements and other countries' experience concerning developments in other sectors;
- capacity for policy analysis, negotiation of policy goals and instruments, policy formulation, and implementation of policy instruments such as laws, institutional reforms, incentives and financing mechanisms;
- systemic use of local knowledge, experience and capabilities;
- sharing of knowledge on specific issues and themes through networks.

International forest information platform

The Facility is establishing an international forest information platform to enable users to identify and have access to the best possible sources of knowledge and information relevant to the national forest programme process, whether technical, political, process-related or financial. This platform is a collaborative effort among key providers of knowledge and information. It will make material available in several forms, including electronically, via the Internet, and in print, for those with either insufficient or no access to the Internet. Links are also being established with forest-related international conventions and processes and with providers of information in other sectors such as agriculture, transport, mining and tourism.

Contributions are received from national governments, research institutions, the private sector, NGOs and a multitude of sources that collect information on broad issues, including

gender equity, conflict resolution, human rights, governance and corruption. More specifically, organizations and agencies involved in the initiative include the Tropical Agriculture Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), CIFOR, FAO, the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), IUCN, the World Resources Institute (WRI), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Global Forest Watch and the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) Global Forest Information Service.

Further information on the National Forest Programme Facility is available on the Internet at www.fao.org/forestry/nfp.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

WSSD, held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26 August to 4 September 2002, conducted a ten-year review of UNCED commitments to sustainable development. Participation and interest in the event ran high, with more than 21 000 people joining 104 Heads of State and Government. The two main outcomes were the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation. In addition, more than 300 partnerships and other initiatives were submitted to the UN to advance sustainable development in various sectors.

Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development

The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development affirmed the commitment of countries to continue to implement Agenda 21, endorsed the Plan of Implementation and pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Countries also resolved to increase access to basic requirements such as clean water, sanitation, adequate shelter, energy, health care and food security, and to protect biological diversity. The document reiterates that economic and social development and

International partnerships launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development

CONGO BASIN FOREST PARTNERSHIP

At WSSD, the Governments of South Africa and the United States, along with Conservation International, WWF, the Wildlife Conservation Society and many others, announced the establishment of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership to promote economic development, alleviate poverty, improve governance and enhance conservation of natural resources in the region. These shared goals will be pursued through a network of national parks and protected areas, well-managed forestry concessions and assistance to communities that depend on forest and wildlife resources in 11 key landscapes in six Central African countries: Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. Working together, governments, business and civil society are committed to investing time, energy and resources to bring about positive change in natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods in one of the world's largest blocks of intact and interconnected tropical forest.

ASIA FOREST PARTNERSHIP

The Government of Japan and its partners, including several other governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, launched the Asia Forest Partnership to promote sustainable forest management in the region. The collaborative arrangement addresses issues related to good governance and

law enforcement, capacity building, illegal logging, forest fires and degraded lands. Building on current international and regional activities, cooperation will extend to such areas as the development of forest policies, plans and programmes; the use of satellite data and mapping; participatory management; human and institutional development; and intersectoral coordination within governments. The partnership expects to enhance ongoing sustainable forest management initiatives by providing a framework for conducting research, exchanging information and experiences, and identifying and implementing new bilateral and multilateral programmes.

AMAZON REGION PROTECTED AREAS PROGRAMME

The Amazon Region Protected Areas Programme was presented by the Government of Brazil, GEF, the World Bank and WWF. It aims to expand and consolidate the protected areas system in the Amazon region of Brazil – a region that covers about 5 million square kilometres, encompasses the largest section of rain forest remaining on the planet, contains 23 ecoregions and is the repository of significant biological diversity. Over a ten-year period, the project is expected to create 18 million hectares of new protected areas; consolidate 7 million hectares of existing ones; establish and operate an endowment fund; and set up a system for monitoring and evaluating biological diversity at the protected area and regional levels.

environmental protection are the pillars of sustainable development and emphasizes the vital role of women, indigenous people and the private sector in achieving this goal.

Plan of Implementation

The Plan of Implementation emphasizes that sustainable development depends on the eradication of poverty, changes to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and the protection and management of natural resources. It notes that

sound national policies, democratic institutions, good governance, ethics and international cooperation are critical factors in the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In addition, the plan specifically calls for action to foster development in Africa and highlights the challenges that globalization poses to sustainable development. A number of global targets were agreed, for example:

- to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than US\$1 a day, the

proportion of people who suffer from hunger and the proportion of people who are without access to safe drinking-water;

- to make progress in the formulation of national strategies for sustainable development and to begin their implementation by 2005;
- to reduce significantly the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010.

Furthermore, the Plan of Implementation calls for significant increases in financial resources, trade opportunities, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, education and awareness raising, capacity building, scientific capabilities and information for decision-making, because all are important means to implement commitments. It lists detailed actions to take in each of these areas, mainly on the basis of the outcomes of major UN conferences such as the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002, and the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Doha, Qatar in 2001. The plan also calls for strengthened interagency collaboration among UN bodies, especially through partnerships, to bring about positive change on the ground.

WSSD and forests

The Plan of Implementation recognizes sustainable forest management as essential to achieving sustainable development and as a critical means for eradicating poverty, reducing deforestation, halting the loss of forest biological diversity, improving food security and increasing access to safe drinking-water and affordable energy. It calls for action to:

- support UNFF, with the assistance of CPF;
- accelerate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action;
- improve domestic forest law enforcement and efforts to combat illegal international trade in forest products;
- promote sustainable timber harvesting;
- address the needs of the poorest regions, which suffer the highest rates of deforestation;

- support capacity building for sustainable forest management;
- support indigenous and community-based forest management systems;
- implement the CBD expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity.

With a focus on development in Africa, the Plan calls for financial and technical support for afforestation and reforestation, for building capacity to combat deforestation and desertification and for improving national forest-related policy and legal frameworks on the continent.

Agreements reached at WSSD in other sectors, such as water, agriculture, energy and biological diversity, will also affect forests, particularly with regard to calls for integrated land management and water-use plans based on the sustainable use of renewable resources. The need for new and different partnerships has therefore never been greater, and WSSD has provided the impetus for all sectors to rise to the challenges ahead. ♦

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