

Revitalizing UNFF: Critical Issues and Ways Forward

Paper for the Country-led Initiative on Multi-year Programme of Work of the United Nations Forum on Forests: Charting the Way Forward to 2015

Bali, Indonesia

13-16 February 2007

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The Paper discusses:

- ❑ Critical and emerging issues likely to significantly impact on forests
- ❑ Lessons from UNFF and other processes relevant to the design of the UNFF's future work
- ❑ Criteria for prioritizing issues for inclusion in the MYPOW, and illustrative actions

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Critical and Emerging Issues

Critical and Emerging Issues

Criteria for issues selected:

- Likely to have significant impacts on forest in near future
- Require global cooperation to address
- Insufficiently addressed by UNFF

Critical and Emerging Issues: Climate change

- Climate change already upon us; poor people in developing countries most vulnerable
- Need to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and land use change, and methods to measure and monitor
- Need for pro-poor adaptations and measures to increase terrestrial carbon pools, reduce vulnerability
- Need common standards and policies for bio-energy, with attention to rights, institutions, equity

Critical and Emerging Issues: Trade and Investment

- ❑ Growing global demand for forest products
- ❑ Plantations increasingly important source of industrial wood
- ❑ Trade liberalization facilitating international trade in forest products, other products affecting forests
- ❑ Financial integration facilitating large-scale investments in forestry;
- ❑ CSR, voluntary reporting initiatives

Critical and Emerging Issues: Governance

- ❑ Governance failure a key underlying cause of unsustainable forest use
- ❑ Corruption a serious challenge; violent conflict a manifestation of extreme governance failure
- ❑ Initiatives to improve poor people's use and control of forests important entry point for governance reforms
- ❑ Nfps have been important mechanisms for promoting reforms in many countries

Critical and Emerging Issues: Ecosystem Services

- ❑ SFM paradigm needs to recognize ecosystem level and cross-sectoral influences
- ❑ Although 10-12% of tropical forest under legal protection, effectiveness of protection is low
- ❑ Benefits from forest conservation tend to accrue at national/global levels; costs of forest protection often borne by local communities
- ❑ Need to understand trade-offs between livelihoods and conservation
- ❑ Forest tenure and access rights are key considerations

Lessons for Rethinking UNFF's Future Way of Working

Key messages:

- Continuing need for a high level political forum with comprehensive forest mandate
- UNFF uniquely positioned for this role
- But UNFF would have to reinvent itself; adapt new, more effective ways of working

Reinventing UNFF

- ❑ UNFF credited with some laudable successes
- ❑ Structural and procedural weakness constrained UNFF's effectiveness in pursuing original mandate
- ❑ UNFF-6 adopted additional goals and expanded the functions of UNFF
- ❑ It is even more critical for UNFF to learn from other processes and forums and to address weaknesses

Links to other forest-related processes and fora

- Work of many forest-related processes/ fora directly or indirectly support UNFF agenda
- Collaboration can enhance innovation, broaden perspective and bring additional resources
- **Ex:** Synergy with CBD forest program; 2008 review
- **Ex:** Coordinate with IUCN, WWF and CBD on expanding protected areas

Broadening the concept of SFM

- Despite comprehensive UNFF mandate, narrow frame of SFM; inadequate attention to inter-sectoral factors;
- Difficulty in relating to other conventions framed around ecosystems and landscapes
- **Ex:** Millennium Ecosystem Assessment framework on ecosystems and human well-being interactions
- **Ex:** UNCCD's work with UNDP and UNEP on dryland development, with FAO on dryland degradation assessment

From negotiating text to substantive dialogue and cooperation

- ❑ Prolonged text negotiation has diverted UNFF time away from its substantive agenda
- ❑ Effectiveness of instruments depends more on its content, how parties regard them, and context in which they operate
- ❑ MYPOW could be defined in a flexible manner with activities that can proceed even without a legally binding instrument
- ❑ **Ex:** Convention on Migratory Species uses concise, output-oriented text (2 page resolution)

Participation by Multiple Stakeholders

- ❑ UNFF structural design and procedures inhibit multi-stakeholder participation
- ❑ Activities appear fragmented; do not systematically inform discussions and decisions of different components
- ❑ Declining stakeholder interest; low participation in Ministerial sessions; little apparent political impact
- ❑ **Ex:** ITTO widening space for civil society input in sessions
- ❑ **Ex:** CBD Clearing House mechanism promotes tools for decision-making, training, capacity building, etc

Linkages with Regional Initiatives

- Regional mechanisms tend to have better chances of garnering higher level political buy-in
- UNFF can support regional efforts and help link them to global processes and stakeholders
- **Ex:** UNCCD links with NEPAD and sub-regional bodies eg ECOWAS and SADC; UNCCD work based on established priorities of these bodies
- **Ex:** Regional forest initiatives (eg COMIFAC, AFP, ACT) can be platforms for collaboration with UNFF

Scientific and technical information and capacity

- ❑ Scientific and technical support can enhance credibility and effectiveness of processes
- ❑ Partnerships with existing scientific/ technical efforts can enhance analysis, avoid duplication
- ❑ Technical support and capacity strengthening to help member states monitor and report
- ❑ Need to decide early in MYPOW the process and information needed for IAF assessment in 2015
- ❑ **Ex:** CBD/ UNFCCC practices to enhance country reporting on needed information

Conclusions

Conclusions

- UNFF could enrich substance and reach of its work through strengthened synergies and institutional collaborations
- UNFF would do well to focus and organize its work around a fewer set of thematic issues

Conclusion – 1

- ❑ Strengthen links to other international forest-related fora and entities
- ❑ Broaden the framing of SFM
- ❑ Shift emphasis from text negotiation to substantive dialogue and cooperation
- ❑ Increase opportunities for meaningful participation by multiple stakeholders
- ❑ Increase linkages with regional initiatives
- ❑ Leverage scientific and technical information to improve effectiveness

Conclusion - 2

Criteria for prioritizing issues and actions:

- Action has significant potential to contribute to achievement of UNFF objectives
- Action addresses a problem requiring global level cooperation to effectively solve
- Action has potential to add value to existing processes
- Action has potential to synchronize with agendas of other international processes

Thank you