

**REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS
HELD AT THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTER FROM THE 24TH JANUARY TO
4TH OF FEBRUARY 2011**

SUBMITTED TO



**THE INTERNATIONAL FORESTRY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
ON BEHALF OF THE YOUTH AND CHILDREN MAJOR GROUP**

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On Monday, 24 January,

The Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF9) was one of the remarkable events for IFSA. Though out of over 50 people that registered to represent the youth and children major group only 4 IFSA delegates made it to New York. IFSA was ably represented by Tolulope Daramola from Nigeria, Torsten Möllmann from Germany, Zeynep Avcıbaşı Korkmaz from Turkey, and Julius Adewopo whom later join the delegates at the second week from Florida USA.

The ninth session of United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF9) convened at UN Headquarters in a very chilly New York, under the theme “Forests for Peoples, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication.” In the morning plenary session, delegates heard opening statements and addressed organizational matters, progress towards sustainable forest management (SFM), and the International Year of Forests 2011.

Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF Secretariat, presented on the Secretary-General's report on achieving the four Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs) and implementing the UN Forest Instrument, highlighting the interconnectedness of the GOFs and the Forest Instrument and lauding Ghana for being the first country to systematically implement the Forest Instrument. Delegates then heard opening statements from member States and regional groups.

The afternoon plenary session also addressed means of implementation, and heard about the launch of the FAO “State of the World’s Forests 2011.” The report of the first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Forest Financing (AHEG-1) was introduced by AHEG Co-Chairs, Jan Heino (Finland) and Macharia Kamau (Kenya).

Co-Chair Heino said the creation of the AHEG provides a policy space to work towards an agreement on forest finance at UNFF10, while Co-Chair Macharia stressed the need for a solid intersessional process with full involvement of governments and CPF aimed at, *inter alia*: filling information gaps on possible sources of forest finance, assessing options for forest financing architecture for consideration by AHEG-2, and assessing the implications of REDD+, the Green Fund established the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 16), and other existing sources of finance.

Afterwards, a panel discussion was held on food, energy and economic challenges and opportunities, with special focus on women and youth. Tolulope Daramola IFSA-UNFF head of subcommision was among the panelist where he was able to defend the cause of the youth and children in the sustainable forests management and the need to review the policies that governs forests in other to ensure the secured right to access natural resources for the younger generations



In white at the second left: Tolulope Daramola during his presentation

On Tuesday, 25 January.

The ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF9) convened for the second morning of deliberations in snowy New York. In the morning, delegates continued hearing opening statements from members and held discussions on the UNFF9 theme, “Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication.” In the afternoon, delegates met to consider enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, as well as regional and subregional inputs.

Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF, presented an overview of the Secretary-General’s reports on the theme of UNFF9. She said a true understanding of the value of forests can only be achieved if cultural and social values are linked with economic and environmental values, and noted that the recommendations of the report included a major focus on forest governance, tenure security and capacity building.

In the afternoon, Director McAlpine introduced the report on Enhanced Cooperation and Policy and Programme Coordination. She highlighted new areas of work, including new linkages with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and integration of forest issues into post-conflict and post-disaster strategies, citing the example of using sustainable cooking methods in refugee camps. Many countries highlighted the positive results of these regional initiatives.



Torsten Mollen from Germany and Tolulope Daramola from Nigeria during the sessions

In the session on Regional and Subregional Inputs, McAlpine said that inputs to UNFF were received from 17 regional and subregional partners. She said these inputs provide a clear idea of different regional realities.

On Wednesday morning, 26 January.

Jan McAlpine, Director, UNFF, introduced a Secretariat's note on the multi-stakeholder dialogue, and three discussion papers prepared by Major Groups on the three sub-themes of UNFF9, namely: community-based forest management; forests and culture; and social development and indigenous and other forest-dependent communities, including forests land tenure.



Major Groups during the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

Director McAlpine commended Major Groups for their work in preparing joint discussion papers on each theme, which she said was unprecedented. Major Groups representatives then summarized and presented recommendations contained in the discussion papers.



In the afternoon, delegates met in two working groups to address, respectively, UNFF9's main theme, "Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication," and means of implementation. Working Group I heard presentations on the country and Major Group-led initiatives held in Guilin, China, Oaxaca, Mexico and Accra, Ghana.

Delegates also shared their national experiences on forests for people, and discussed the proposed Forum's recommendations to member states, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members and the UNFF Secretariat for addressing key challenges of forests contributing to poverty alleviation and human well-being. Working Group II addressed the assessment of the implementation of the forest instrument. Delegates discussed national experiences to implement the forest instrument and proposals to enhance the format of reports, as well as different means to facilitate the submission of member states' reports to UNFF.

On Thursday, 27 January.

All meeting were canceled at the UN headquarters because of the snow storm. And we had a great time to spend by and for ourselves enjoying the snow

On Friday, 28 January

Delegates reconvened for the ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF9) following the suspension of negotiations on Thursday, 27 January, due to the snow storm that made landfall in New York. In the morning, delegates convened in a joint session of the working groups to discuss the Ministerial Declaration. Delegates heard inputs from Major Groups, countries and international organizations on the content and format of the Ministerial Declaration, with the proposals being forwarded to the Secretariat to allow further deliberation.



From the far right Zeynep, Torsten and Tolulope during the session

Working Groups I and II met in the morning and afternoon. In the morning, Working Group I (WGI) discussed UNFF's recommendations regarding the International Year of Forests 2011 (IYF 2011) and heard from countries and Major Groups on planned activities to commemorate the IYF 2011. In the afternoon, the group considered the Secretary-General's recommendations to the high-level segment, which will take place on 2-3 February 2011.

Working Group II addressed the two issues remaining under its agenda, namely: enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests; and means of implementation. Delegates discussed recommendations to enhance cooperation and coordination with, *inter alia*, other MEA Secretariats and organizations, as well as to draft guidelines for country-led, organization-led, region-led and major group-led initiatives in support of the UNFF.

Afterwards, discussions turned to means of implementation, with delegates providing proposals focused on, among other things: SFM finance, financial mechanisms, the Open-ended Intergovernmental *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Forest Financing, and the activities and work to be undertaken during the intersessional period. Delegates then convened in plenary to recap the week's work.

On Monday, 31 January

The ninth session of the UNFF reconvened in the morning to receive copies of a Draft Ministerial Declaration and a Draft Omnibus Resolution prepared by the Bureau on Friday, 28 January, on the basis of interventions made by delegates during the first week of the meeting. The UNFF Secretariat read through the Draft Ministerial Declaration, with Chair Ozols noting that both the draft Ministerial Declaration and the Draft Omnibus Resolution had been posted on the UNFF's website for consideration by delegates over the weekend. Delegates then adjourned to discuss the drafts within their caucuses.



Zeynep from Turkey ready for the day's session

In the afternoon, delegates convened in working groups to provide comments on the two documents presented in plenary during the morning. Working Group I (WGI) discussions moved swiftly, with delegates providing comments, paragraph-by-paragraph, on the Draft Ministerial Declaration. After providing several comments on the first seven paragraphs, the G-77/China stated it required additional time to discuss the rest of the Declaration, stating it would convene on Monday evening to coordinate its position and present its comments to WGI on Tuesday morning. He proposed that other participants present their positions in the interim. Some delegates said they could not agree to present positions at different times, so the Working Group eventually agreed to reconvene on Tuesday morning to continue deliberations.

In Working Group II, delegates addressed the Bureau's Draft Omnibus Resolution. Delegates welcomed the text and went paragraph-by-paragraph proposing amendments to the preambular paragraphs as well as in the operative text on, *inter alia*, Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication. Negotiations continued late into the night.

Delegates were also invited to watch one of the winning films from the International Forest Film Festival, "The Queen of Trees," illustrating the symbiotic relationship between the Sycamore Fig Tree and the fig wasp, and how this relationship allows the Sycamore Fig to continue in its pivotal role as a source of food and shelter for creatures, great and small.

On Tuesday, 1 February.

Delegates convened for the ninth session of the UNFF. They met in working groups throughout the day to finalize the text of a draft Ministerial Declaration and a draft Omnibus Resolution prepared by the Bureau.

In Working Group I (WGI), delegates met in the morning to continue to provide paragraph-by-paragraph comments on a draft Ministerial Declaration. They proposed edits to paragraphs eight to thirteen, and finalized the first revision of the text of a Ministerial Declaration. In the

afternoon, WGI received a compilation of the text on the basis of the interventions made in the morning. Delegates then decided to: request the Bureau to consolidate the various proposals made by delegates on the first seven paragraphs of the draft Ministerial Declaration into a single proposed text for the consideration of WGI on Wednesday, February 2; and reconvene in the evening to deliberate on the operative paragraphs of a draft Ministerial Declaration.

Working Group II (WGII) met in the morning to discuss the Bureau Draft Omnibus Resolution. Delegates addressed the issue of Forests for People, Livelihoods and Poverty Eradication and the assessment of progress, with delegates suggesting going through the text, paragraph-by-paragraph, and suggesting amendments. During the afternoon, WGII met again to consider means of implementation.

The Co-Chairs for the first Open-ended Intergovernmental *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Forest Financing (AHEG-1), Jan Heino (Finland) and Macharia Kamau (Kenya), noted that informal consultations were taking place regarding the report of AHEG-1 and proposed activities to be undertaken during the intersessional period. In order to avoid duplication of work, delegates agreed to wait until the end of the informal consultations, to then consider the outcome of those deliberations in WGII.

In the afternoon, delegates met briefly in plenary to hear back from WGI and WGII on their deliberations. Both working groups then held evening sessions, which continued late into the night.

On Wednesday, 2 February.

On this day the International Year of forests was launched. For this the meeting took place in the General Assembly Hall. Not all the foreseen speakers made it due to the weather conditions to New York. Remarkable was the speech of the twelve year old boy Felix Finkbeiner from Germany. He started the Plant-for-the-Planet campaign. In his speech he lined out, how forests are important for the future. Furthermore he reminded on the fact the time spans one is talking about is in the lifetime of children. For children it is not a theoretical question, but a question of their own survival. He got the most media attention of all speakers. With this he made a good presentation of the needs of the Children and Youth Major Group. After lunch the high level round table started.

Delegates convened for the opening of the High-Level Segment of the ninth session of the UNFF. In the morning, delegates met in a special session of the UN General Assembly for the launch of the International Year of Forests 2011 (IYF 2011). In the afternoon, delegates convened in two high-level roundtable sessions on “Forests for people” and “Finance for forest-dependent communities.”

Welcomed by Joseph Deiss, President of the sixty-fifth session of the UN General Assembly, delegates heard a video message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who stressed that the IYF 2011 is an important platform for increasing awareness of the importance of forests. Participants then heard messages from a number of dignitaries, including Nobel Laureate Wangari Mathaai, who noted that sustainable management of natural resources and equitable sharing of benefits was imperative to improve livelihoods. Delegates were also given the

opportunity to view film clips from the International Forest Film Festival.

Ana Maria Sampaio Fernandes, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Office at Nairobi, moderated the Round Table on “Finance for forest-dependent communities”.

Sampaio introduced some key questions to address, including: which are the more adequate sources of funding for forest-dependent communities; the implications of

REDD+ for local communities; and possible ways to secure long-term financing. High-level country representatives presented on national experiences, noting remaining key challenges in sustainable forest management (SFM) financing both at the national and international levels. In the ensuing discussions participants discussed: how to ensure that forests are prioritized for financing in the international arena, among MEAs and other sectors; and how to ensure a greater allocation of the national budget to forests.

Mohammed El-Ashry, Senior Fellow, United Nations Foundation, and former CEO, Global Environment Facility (GEF) moderated the Round Table on Forests for people, where high-level country representatives made statements highlighting country experiences on this topic. In their interventions, delegates highlighted the multiple values and contributions of forests to human well-being and environmental stability, including their contributions to economic development, poverty eradication, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, natural disaster risks reduction, and soil and water quality, recreation and spiritual well-being, among many other goods. Delegates also shared their national experiences with SFM for the benefit of people, including successes and challenges.

On Thursday, 3 February.

Delegates convened for the ninth session of the UNFF, the final day of the High Level Segment. In the morning, delegates assembled in two Roundtable sessions on “Forests-plus: a cross-sectoral and cross-institutional approach” and “Forests and Rio+20.” In the afternoon, delegates met in a High-Level Panel discussion with the heads of the 14 member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

During the High-Level Segment Closing Plenary, delegates adopted the Ministerial Declaration of UNFF9. In the afternoon and evening, delegates continued their deliberations to finalize a Draft Omnibus Resolution, which will be taken up in plenary on Friday, 4 February.

Zainol Zainuddin (Malaysia) moderated the “Forests-plus” Roundtable, highlighting that forests are at the intersection of social and economic development and play a key role in poverty eradication. Niels Koch, President, IUFRO, highlighted the need to move from a focus on forests towards the concept of “forests+”, which embraces inter-sectoral and inter-institutional complexity. He said governance arrangements: tend to simplify the complexity of forest problems, lack coordination, and fail to bridge the gap between high-level negotiations and project-level activities, noting a forests+ approach should build on a better understanding of actors’ interests.

Country representatives discussed the challenges of addressing the various aspects of forests across sectors and institutions, both at the national and international levels. Many underscored national and regional initiatives, as well as the opportunity that Rio+20 provides to bring a clear message on the role of forests to multiple sectors.

The "Forests and Rio+20" Roundtable was moderated by Daniel Reifsnyder, Deputy Assistant Secretary, US State Department. Noting that the purpose of the roundtable was to discuss the role of forests in the broader sustainable development agenda, he invited participants to focus on: notable successes in SFM since the 1992 Rio Summit; critical challenges and obstacles to SFM identified since then; and measures required to ensure that forests remain healthy and contribute to human well-being and poverty eradication.

Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of Rio+20, invited delegates to consider, *inter alia*: gaps in SFM implementation and new and emerging challenges; how to use Rio+20 to highlight the connection between a people-centered approach to SFM and a green economy; and the existing international framework on forests. Country representatives reflected on, *inter alia*, successes and challenges to promoting SFM in the context of sustainable development, the challenges and opportunities of promoting SFM within a green economy, and how to advance the profile of forests in the Rio+20 Conference.

During the plenary meeting, delegates adopted the Ministerial Declaration, and then heard several country statements about its significance. WGII deliberations continued into the night, considering a Draft Omnibus Resolution.

On Friday, 4 February.

Delegates convened for the final day of the ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF). Following the late night deliberations on a proposed Omnibus Resolution on Thursday night, delegates resumed negotiations on Friday morning, and met throughout the day. The contentious issue of references to the outcomes of UNFCCC COP 16 within the Omnibus Resolution threatened to derail what was a largely optimistic two weeks.

With a compromise reached, plenary resumed at 5:29 pm. Chair Arvids Ozols introduced the Omnibus Resolution, which was adopted by acclamation, with some delegations noting their comments and reservations for the record. Turkey then offered to host the tenth session of the UNFF in Istanbul in 2013.

The decision will be forwarded to the UN Economic and Social Council for consideration. In closing remarks, UNFF Director Jan McAlpine highlighted the contribution of the Bureau in making UNFF9 a success. Chair Ozols outlined the successful achievements of the Forum, including the launch of the International Year of Forests 2011, High-Level Roundtable discussions, the Ministerial Declaration and the Omnibus Resolution. He gavelled UNFF9 to a close at 6:28 pm.



International Year of Forests 2011 Logo projected onto the UN secretariat building