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Monitoring of the National Forest Programme of Germany

Proposal for an Approach and Procedures

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Monitoring of the National Forest Programme of Germany – Proposal for an Approach and Procedures¹

1. Background

Under the leadership of the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry BML², the societal dialogue process for elaborating a national forest programme (NFP), according to the concept of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests IPF of the United Nations, was started in autumn 1999. In a continuous process, the NFP should develop progressively the consensus of all interest groups for a forest policy that meets the objective of sustainable forest management within the framework of sustainable development in consideration of ecological, economic, and social aspects. Therefore, political guidelines for action and appropriate proposals for their implementation should be elaborated at the national level. The intention is to include the results of the NFP process in the "National Strategy for Sustainability", which is being elaborated under the lead of the Government Chancellery since 2001, in order to establish political coherence with other sectors.

The first phase of the process was finished in October 2000 after a total of nine "Round Table" conferences with the participation of a multitude of actors involved in forest policy. The results obtained by then were documented and presented to the public (BML, ed., 2000). At the beginning of the second phase in April 2001, and following upon the analysis of the previous process, the actors of the NFP agreed on a **mandatory guideline** to be the basis of the development of the future socio-political dialogue within the framework of the NFP. This "Manual"³ includes under point 7 the following statement about monitoring: *"The process as well as the implementation of the proposals for action are being monitored. The monitoring results are presented to subsequent Round Tables. The Round Table determines three actors for this*

¹ A first version of this paper was presented at the 12th Round Table of the NFP Germany

² Since 2001: Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food, and Agriculture (BMVEL)

³ National Forest Programme (NFP) Germany – Manual for the Second Phase, adopted at the 10th Round Table, Bonn on 2-3 April 2001.

task. The prerequisites for the monitoring of the implementation of the proposals for action are to be fixed in the pertinent discussions on the contents of technical issues."

At the 11th Round Table, the actors of the NFP asked the group of authors to develop a proposal for the monitoring of the NFP. The paper in hand is providing a first basis for discussion.

2. Monitoring – international references

Based on the UNCED Forest Principles (Rio, 1992), the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forest IPF (1995-1997) and of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests IFF (1997-2000) represent the most concrete and – since being adopted by the international community of States – the most important results of the international dialogue on forests. The encouragement of countries to elaborate and implement national forest programmes is to be regarded as the most important component of the IPF/ IFF proposals for action, to which basically all other country-specific proposals for action can be related.

Statements on the subject of monitoring are found in both the final report of the IPF and the one of the IFF, as well as in the recent decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

In this context one should differentiate

- (a) statements on the monitoring of national forest programmes, hence the monitoring of the process and its effectiveness (e.g. IPF Final Report para. 8, 17(c), (d), (f); IFF Final Report para. 10), including relevant international co-operation (IPF para. 71, 138),
- (b) statements on the monitoring of the implementation of the IPF proposals for action (IFF Final Report chapter I B. para. 10–15 and para. 17(a), (b), (d)), and
- (c) statements on the monitoring of the impact of actions, e.g. monitoring of the forest condition or forest health (e.g. IPF Final Report, para. 48-50; IFF Final Report para. 7) or on the progress towards sustainable forest management by implementing the outcomes of international negotiations (e.g. IPF Final Report para. 147; IFF Final Report para. 10), as well as in view of changes in market con-

ditions with implications on sustainable forest management (IFF Final Report para. 38).

- (d) Other statements refer to methods of monitoring and their efficiency (IPF Final Report para. 89(c); IFF Final Report para. 10), monitoring procedures, technical aspects and participatory mechanisms (IPF Final Report para. 58(b)(vi), 94(d); IFF Final Report para. 10-14, 17(a), (b), 68) and the parameters to be used, mostly with regard to national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (e.g. IPF Final Report para. 108; IFF Final Report para. 10, 15, 17(d)).

The decisions of the first session of UNFF in June 2001, in particular the UNFF Multi Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) as well as the UNFF Plan of Action (PoA), which the ministers are to adopt during UNFF-2 in March 2002, also refer to monitoring, mostly in connection with one of the main functions of the UNFF, namely to facilitate and promote the implementation of IPF/ IFF proposals for action as well as the related reporting, which still needs to be developed (see UNFF MYPOW, sect. B. 1-5, PoA, para. 6-10, 15, 22-24). At the national level, the decisions of the UNFF are relevant mainly with regard to reporting on the progress of implementation of the IPF/ IFF proposals for action.

The original of the above cited text can be viewed in the Appendix to this paper. Here, only one important sentence of the IPF Final Report in relation to the subject of monitoring may be quoted. Proposal for action number 17 (f) reads as follows: "[The Panel] *encouraged countries to elaborate systems, including private and community forest management systems, for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national forest programmes that identify and involve, where appropriate, a broad participation of indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities in meaningful decision-making regarding the management of state forest lands in their proximity, within the context of national laws and legislation*".

In this context, both IFF and UNFF emphasise that the added value of monitoring and reporting emerges mainly at the national level, namely through enhancing the efficiency of national forest programmes and of the efforts towards sustainable forest management. Therefore, exist-

ing systems should be used and harmonised, wherever possible, in order to avoid duplication of work (compare IFF Final Report para. 10, 11). This is also of immediate importance for the monitoring system to be developed within the framework of the NFP Germany.

In the past, Germany participated decisively in shaping the outcomes of the international forest-policy dialogue and made a commitment for their implementation. Hence the Federal Republic of Germany has a certain (self-) obligation to report about the process of implementing the IPF/ IFF proposals for action, and consequently about the process of the NFP as an essential element of implementation. This was put into practice by the German government within the framework of voluntary reporting by countries to UNFF-2 (according to the UNFF decision No. 1/3, Annex PoA, para. 9, 22, 23). A report on the German NFP was also included in the report on national forest programmes of the UN Secretary-General to the UNFF-2.

The development of a monitoring system for the NFP of Germany has been defined de facto within the agreed Manual for the NFP process. Now the question arises as to how and with what efforts this agreement can be honoured.

3. Monitoring – why and what?

Why monitor?

Apart from the above reasons for monitoring on the basis of international and national (self-) commitment, the monitoring of the NFP is designed to contribute to the added value at the national level. Considering the enormous efforts of time and money⁴ spent on the NFP process, it is justified to request a maximum of effectiveness and efficiency of the process.

Monitoring should first and foremost serve as an instrument to help actors to understand and analyse the impacts of the jointly agreed policy and to examine the effectiveness of policy with regard to the achievement of objectives. Moreover, through monitoring critical factors influ-

⁴ It is estimated that one two-day Round Table Meeting with about 50 participants costs about 75.000 Euro. Additional costs are occurring in preparation of Round Tables, and due to a lot of activities in drafting and reporting groups.

encing the success of policy with regard to the achievement of objectives – in the process of formulation as well as in implementation – can be identified, as well as external factors (e.g. other sector policies and processes) with significant influence on the impact of policy. In addition, it is also essential to identify important external – desired and undesired – secondary effects of policies. Simultaneously, it is necessary to ensure that the most immediate possible feedback is given to the actors, the "policy makers", in order that those may respond accordingly and, if appropriate, intervene in a corrective or enhancing manner.

Additionally, monitoring should deliver indications to the actors themselves to assess the effectiveness of their own participation in the process as well as of their actions.

BÖCHER AND KROTT (2001) have been studying dialogue-oriented political processes in the German nature conservation policy of the nineties. In their politico-scientific analysis on co-operative processes and on negotiations for consensus between societal actors as instrument for achieving goals of sustainability, they state that the success of negotiation – compared with the goals of the process – was insufficient. The reasons for this were essentially the lack of mandatory goals and a time frame for their achievement as well as the lack of an agreement on monitoring the implementation of determined measures. According to their findings, results will be effectively promoted if outcomes of a political process are continuously monitored and an active follow-up takes place after the process of negotiation. In this context, the notification and realisation of monitoring measures for verifying the compliance with agreed measures is an important factor for promoting the success of negotiations for consensus within the framework of "co-operative policy".

Hence, monitoring is a fundamental step towards enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of a process and its results. Within the framework of the German NFP process, this means that the fulfilment of the agreements on monitoring stipulated in the Manual may exercise a considerable influence on the success of the NFP process, not only with regard to the successful realisation of the process but also in view of the implementation of its results. Therefore, monitoring must not be postponed until the termination of the process. Instead, interim feedback should

be given regularly accompanying the progress of the process in order to positively influence its further course and the quality of its results.

What should be subject to monitoring?

In addition to its proper goals and contents, the monitoring of a NFP may also apply to the frame conditions under which the goals are to be achieved. In this context it appears very appropriate to apply the monitoring to those principles and elements of national forest programmes which were stipulated by the IPF.

The principles of a NFP are:

- National sovereignty and country leadership in the responsible use of resources.
- Consistency with the constitutional and legal frameworks of each country.
- Consistency with and integration of international agreements and commitments.
- Partnership and participation of all interested parties.
- Holistic and inter-sectoral approach to forest development and conservation.
- Long-term and iterative process of planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Integration with the country's sustainable development strategies.

The elements of a NFP are:

- National Forest Statement on important fields of action in connection with sustainable forest management (vision, overall goals).
- Sector review (collection of information, analysis, debate on forest issues, importance of forest and forestry for society, inter-sectoral linkage and influence).
- Formulation of future forest policies in important fields of action involving the interested public (identification of actors), if necessary policy, legislative, and institutional reform.
- Development of strategies for sustainable development of the forest to ensure its ecological, economic, and social functions.
- Need for action – action plan.
- Financing strategies, mechanisms, and instruments (framework conditions for public and private investment, role of actors, internalisation of external factors).

- Implementation of specific measures and activities.
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E system)
- Mechanisms to ensure participation and resolution of conflicts, for consultation and (cross-sectoral) co-ordination

According to IPF, additional specific aspects should be considered such as:

- decentralisation and empowerment of regional and local levels
- recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights and forms of life
- secure land tenure arrangements and rights of usufruct
- ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources
- sustainable provision of forest goods and services and their adequate valuation

In accordance with the guidelines of the Manual, a distinction between the process of the NFP and its results must also be drawn in this connection. However, some of the above principles, elements, and specific aspects of national forest programmes refer to the *process* (partnership, participation, iterative action, steps of analysis, monitoring and evaluation), some apply to the concrete *results* of the process (formulation of goals, forest policies, bundles of action), but also to the *impacts* (e.g. sustainable provision of goods and services).

Hence there is need for the monitoring of three different aspects of the NFP: *process, results, impact.*

For all three aspects monitoring can only be achieved if standards of reference are identified – i.e. criteria for the process must be clearly defined and its results must be as concrete as possible with regard to agreements on goals and action – and if there are definitely determined objectively measurable and unambiguous standards that stand up to later factual re-examination. These *indicators* must be defined by mutual agreement in the course of the NFP process in order to allow the agreed goals to be achieved, the results to be implemented and their impacts to be recorded. This is the only way to make the effectiveness of the process to be ultimately measurable.

4. Proposal for Approach and Procedure

Process monitoring:

A first step towards process monitoring was taken when the 10th Round Table discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the *first phase* of the German NFP process on the basis of a detailed analysis carried out by HOFMANN AND LISS (2001). As an outcome of this discussion the participants agreed upon the already mentioned "*Manual*" for the future design of the NFP. The Manual defines certain frame values which were not codified before. Those include, for example, independent moderation/ facilitation of the process, a decision on how to deal with minority votes, procedures to elaborate thematic background papers or the obligation to increase internal and external transparency of the process.

As a reaction to the codification of the frame values some significant changes in the German NFP process could already be observed in the beginning of *phase 2* (Round Table conferences 11 and 12), that can be taken as a start for further process monitoring.

First of all, the moderation/ facilitation of the process by a professional and independent facilitator proves to be an important building block for the effective and successful execution of the Round Table conferences. Modern techniques of visualisation to reflect or summarise discussions help to prevent non target-oriented controversies and have a positive influence on the motivation of the participants. At the same time, the neutral status of the facilitator stops the existing allegation of biased moderation-behaviour and improves the overall contentment with the process.

Second, the clearly defined guidelines on how to deal with votes of minority groups in the process make sure that all opinions are considered and documented equally. In this way the unsatisfactory "race" for the lowest common denominator can be prevented and the former allegation that some opinions are reflected stronger than others is invalidated.

Third, a change of roles among some of the most important actors in the NFP process is observable. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, for example, is not acting as an "almighty" administrative body any more as it did in the first phase of the NFP.

Instead it starts taking the role of an intermediary in the NFP and substantially contributes to conflict resolution in the course of the process.

Fourth – and probably most important – a great number of state and non-state actors start changing their particular behaviour patterns in the process. In contrast to the first phase of the NFP which was mainly characterised by a sort of passive “consumer-behaviour” (“...let’s see what the responsible administration is going to present...”) the participants are now willing to take on responsibility by themselves and substantially contribute to the advancement of the National Forest Programme. Stakeholders from NGOs, forest owners or the forest administration of the “Länder” (federate states) now help drafting background papers, write minutes of the Round Table conferences, work on final documents or co-ordinate additional working groups dealing with pending issues and specific questions.

Finally, the NFP starts taking into consideration issues having an impact on international policy aspects of sustainable forest management, e.g. the change of German procurement policies with regard to illegal and unsustainable logging and trade of forest products. This means that the one-sided focus on purely national aspects related to forests and forestry is given up and the NFP acknowledges Germany’s global responsibility for the protection of all kinds of forests, world-wide. This is expected to broaden the discussion on forest-related policy in future.⁵

Further process observation should be built on former results and should develop on this basis. For that purpose, a frame for both the contents and the time-frame of monitoring as well as mandates and responsibilities must be defined by the actors, together and by mutual agreement. It is suggested that reports be given periodically at the Round Table conferences of the NFP. Trends of the process can already be observed today. However, a final assessment as the result of continuous monitoring should only be given after another series of Round Table conferences (interim results) or on the termination of the second phase. The monitoring may then provide adequate evidence for enabling the actors to

evaluate the process from the viewpoint of effectiveness and efficiency.

Monitoring of implementation:

The guidelines of the Manual, which were passed in mutual agreement at the beginning of the second phase of the NFP process, aim at the results being as binding as possible for all actors. Therefore, the broadest possible consensus and the highest possible degree of implementation is strived for with regard to goals, action, respective actors, time frame, and resource requirements. All this should also be documented in writing (see BMVEL (ed.), 2001).

Compared with the above, the goals and proposals for action as yet agreed upon within the framework of the NFP are still *not very concrete* and, above all, are *largely noncommittal*. Detailed measures have not yet been formulated, responsibilities and time frames for implementing measures as well as necessary resources that are to be provided for that purpose have not yet been defined. Furthermore, there are no verifiable indicators at the level of the goals nor at the level of the proposals for action that allow the achievement of objectives to be monitored, let alone the impacts of the process and its results to be analysed.

As a result, there is a general need to jointly solidify the former goals and results step by step and to provide them with adequate indicators of performance. However, since the OBJECTIVES of the NFP have not been formulated accurately from the very beginning, there is an urgent *need of clearly defining these objectives first*. This is the first and indispensable step since all further steps, whether they refer to the formulation of policies, to guidelines for action or to activities, depend on it. Therefore, in order to define the goals or a goal system for the NFP, it is recommended to organise a workshop with the key actors (with equal representation of all relevant groups) whereby they tackle this task in a structured manner assisted by professional facilitation.

The actual monitoring system should then be developed step by step. This development is not intended to be a mechanistic approach in which certain aspects will just be crossed off the list, but is meant to be an iterative approach that gives the actors the opportunity of contributing to shape the process in the course of a series of

⁵ A more detailed analysis can be found in HOFMANN (2002).

meetings, e.g. within the framework of the Round Tables, with adequate communication. Against this setting, certain "milestones", fixed points as concretely as possible, should be agreed upon during the process of continuous development of the monitoring system, in order to put the respective steps of progress of the process on a sound basis on which further steps can be built. A policy of gradualism is often more realistic in this connection than getting extreme demands accepted. When future goals and results are being formulated the definition of adequate indicators for their achievement and potential impact should also be taken into consideration.

Another crucial purpose of monitoring (and evaluation) is to continuously include the results of monitoring – whether of the process or of its impact – into the NFP process in order to progressively enhance its effectiveness. In this context, the actors should create adequate room for feedback loops that are to be included in the process. It is also important that the actors keep reflecting their own role in the overall context. Therefore, the above mentioned periodical meetings are also an opportunity for making the actors aware of the overall objective and their concrete contribution to it.

The binding character of the results of the NFP process will have to be judged by the concreteness of the respective statements and the extent of consensus. This will demand a certain willingness to compromise from the actors in order to introduce items and contents at least partially and/or successively in an iterative approach. This also includes that the actors are willing to assume responsibilities.

Approach to a system of impact monitoring:

The development of a monitoring system for the NFP of Germany that addresses the *impacts* of the process, could roughly be subdivided in the following steps.

- Clarification of goals and tasks of the monitoring system
- Analysis of the initial situation, the political framework, the objectives and actions, the actors and their role, the status of former implementation and results (*note: this was and is being partially accomplished within the framework of the NFP-process*)

- Development of an impact model (identification of areas and ways of activity, formulation of impact hypotheses)
- Selection of impact indicators (interim/ approximate/ final indicators, qualitative and quantitative indicators, application of criteria for "good" indicators)
- Survey approach (definition of a survey approach and its methods, data/ information requirements, planning of specific quantitative and qualitative data collection) (*note: in this context, existing statistics, data, and information sources should be taken into account, where possible, and in consideration of cost-saving aspects only those data should be collected which are absolutely required*)
- Data collection and implementation of surveys (use and completion of existing data, sources and information systems, realisation of specific quantitative and qualitative studies) (*note: see point 5.*)
- Compilation, preparation, and assessment of the data (primary and secondary data) (*note: see point 5.*)
- Documentation, presentation, and communication of the results

In all steps, the involvement of and constant communication with the actors are basic requirements for effective monitoring and feedback of its (interim) results to the actors.

To attend and control the development process of the monitoring system it is recommended for operational reasons to appoint a small group from the circle of actors to be the focal point for the team in charge of the development process.

5. Conclusions

Only if the measures agreed upon in consensus negotiations and the personal contributions of the actors are subjected to long-term monitoring will the binding character of the agreements increase. Therefore, for each step within the framework of the NFP, i.e. for the agreements made within the framework of the content-related priorities of the Round Table meetings, a long-term strategy of follow-up and monitoring should be developed that is supported by the actors and that is clearly integrated in an overall

(goal) system. This implies that agreements on measures of implementation are made as concrete and binding as possible, i.e. with broad consensus, and also include statements on the responsibilities for implementation. In addition, they should be provided with clear, realistic, and verifiable indicators. Only this way measurability of implementation and, consequently, monitoring of performance can be ensured.

As opposed to this, codes of conduct as a kind of self-obligation of actors as they are often strived at within the framework of NFP negotiations will most likely not be successful as political instrument due to the lack of control and the largely unbinding character of the measures (comp. BÖCHER AND KROTT, 2001). However, when the actors know that their efforts are going to be regularly checked they will be more willing to actually implement them. In this context it should be reflected on what mechanism would be effective in the event that proposals for action should not be implemented or that some of the actors should not adhere to agreed measures for which they assume responsibility.

The actors of the NFP should realise that resources must be provided for the monitoring system and its effective use in the process. Therefore, agreements should be made as to who can render services or make (financial) contributions and to what extent, and which information in consideration of the proportionality of funds should be collected, analysed, and prepared in order to ensure adequate monitoring with regard to both the process and the implementation of the results.

To avoid duplication of work, existing monitoring systems and collections of information (e.g. forest area statistics, surveys on forest condition, monitoring of the impacts of air pollutants) should be included in the monitoring approach for the NFP. Furthermore, with regard to the reporting at the international level it should be examined as to what extent the monitoring of the implementation of the IPF/ IFF proposals for action *could be linked to* the implementation of other forest-related international instruments (e.g. CBD), and whether and in what manner the relevant reports to international level could be harmonised as part of labour-saving measures. This request has existed for a long time and is being followed up within the framework of the UNFF. In this context, Germany could again

decisively shape the discussion by presenting adequate models.

Therefore, it is recommended to develop a monitoring system for the NFP that complies with the above requirements. For that purpose, the Round Table should schedule a discussion to put the suggested approach up for debate and to make a decision on the development of an appropriate procedure. Professional advice by experienced specialists is indispensable in support of the development and implementation of monitoring, also with regard to cost/ benefit efficiency of the NFP process.

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**Appendix:
Extracts on the topic of monitoring from
documents of IPF, IFF and UNFF**

IPF Final Report, Feb. 1997

**I. IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST-RELATED
DECISIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CON-
FERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVEL-
OPMENT AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNA-
TIONAL LEVELS, INCLUDING AN EXAMINA-
TION OF SECTORAL AND CROSS-SECTORAL
LINKAGES**

A. Progress through national forest and land-use programmes

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Conclusions

8. The Panel recognized the importance of comprehensive forest policy frameworks or "national forest programmes" for the achievement of sustainable forest management. It agreed that the term "national forest programme" is a generic term for a wide range of approaches to sustainable forest management within different countries, to be applied at national and subnational levels based on the basic principles outlined below. It emphasized that national forest programmes demand a broad intersectoral approach at all stages, including the formulation of policies, strategies and plans of action, as well as their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. National forest programmes should be implemented in the context of each country's socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental situation, and should be integrated into wider programmes for sustainable land use, in accordance with chapters 10 to 15 of Agenda 21. The activities of other sectors, such as agriculture, energy and industrial development, should be taken into account.

9. The Panel emphasized a number of specific elements that need to be considered during the development and implementation of national forest programmes, in particular the need for appropriate participatory mechanisms to involve all interested parties; decentralization, where applicable, and empowerment of regional and local government structures; consistent with the constitutional and legal frameworks of each country, recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, inter alia, indigenous people, local communities, forest dwellers and forest owners; secure land tenure arrangements; and the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms and conflict-resolution schemes.

10. Regardless of the approach adopted by individual countries, national forest programmes, as long-term iterative processes, should recognize the following as key elements: national sovereignty and country leadership; consistency with national policies and international commitments; integration with the country's sustainable development strategies; partnership and participation; and holistic and intersectoral approaches. The Panel acknowledged the usefulness of testing and demonstrating the concept of national forest programmes on an operational scale.

11. The Panel recognized the need for national forest programmes to be based on a sound economic valuation of forest resources, including environmental services and non-timber products. It noted that national forest programmes can provide an effective link between strategic and operational planning. They should be specifically designed to increase effectiveness and efficiency at the country level with a view to attracting increased domestic and external resources.

12. The Panel also recognized the need for an external economic and commercial environment that is supportive of national forest programmes. Their implementation will be affected by market forces, including international trade. They need to be supported by a market context that enhances the economic values of forest resources and a price mechanism that promotes an adequate and remunerative return for the sustainable use of forest resources.

13. The Panel stressed that funding, in particular the provision of external resources, including private foreign investment and official development assistance (ODA), is greatly facilitated by a clear commitment on the part of recipient Governments to the implementation of national policies and programmes that promote sustainable forest management in the forest and related sectors. More efficient investment policies are needed for the successful implementation of national forest programmes.

14. Because of the intersectoral nature of national forest programmes, the Panel stressed the need for national authorities to look into the institutional capacity of forest-related sectors to ensure the successful implementation of such programmes. It emphasized the importance of assessing and - where necessary - enhancing national capabilities at all levels to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate sustainable forest management.

15. The Panel acknowledged that coordination among all interested parties at the national and international levels is crucial for sustainable forest management. The Panel noted and welcomed further input from the Conference of the Parties to the

Convention on Biological Diversity with respect to forest biological diversity.

16. Finally, the Panel noted the importance of improving regional and international cooperation for the exchange of information, technology and know-how by establishing appropriate networks to support national programmes for sustainable forest management.

Proposals for action

17. The Panel:

(a) Encouraged countries, in accordance with their national sovereignty, specific country conditions and national legislation, to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national forest programmes, which include a wide range of approaches for sustainable forest management, taking into consideration the following: consistency with national, subnational or local policies and strategies, and – as appropriate - international agreements; partnership and participatory mechanisms to involve interested parties; recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, inter alia, indigenous people and local communities; secure land tenure arrangements; holistic, intersectoral and iterative approaches; ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources; and adequate provision and valuation of forest goods and services;

(b) Called for improved cooperation in support of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, and urged all countries to use national forest programmes, as appropriate, as a basis for international cooperation in the forest sector;

(c) Stressed the need for international cooperation in the adequate provision of ODA, as well as possible new and additional funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other appropriate innovative sources of finance for the effective development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national forest programmes;

(d) Encouraged countries to integrate suitable criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, as appropriate, into the overall process of the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national forest programmes, on a step-by-step basis;

(e) Urged countries to develop, test and implement appropriate participatory mechanisms for integrating timely and continuous multidisciplinary research into all stages of the planning cycle;

(f) Encouraged countries to elaborate systems, including private and community forest management systems, for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national forest programmes that identify and involve, where appropriate, a broad participation of indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities in meaningful decision-making regarding the management of state forest lands in their proximity, within the context of national laws and legislation;

(g) Urged countries, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to include capacity-building as an objective of national forest programmes, paying particular attention to training, extension services and technology transfer and financial assistance from developed countries, taking due account of local traditional forest-related knowledge;

(h) Encouraged countries to establish sound national coordination mechanisms or strategies among all interested parties, based on consensus-building principles, to promote the implementation of national forest programmes;

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48. The Panel emphasized the need to continue monitoring and evaluating the impact of airborne pollution on forest health wherever it has been demonstrated in the world, and the need for information on how the countries concerned have addressed such problems. The Panel also stressed the need for continuing action to reduce airborne pollution, including the transfer and use of the best available as well as future environmentally sound technologies on mutually agreed terms. The problem has to be solved by action outside the forests.

49. The Panel stressed the need for international cooperation, including information exchange; research and field data collection; evaluation of the socioeconomic and environmental impact of airborne pollution on forests; studies of ecosystem function where pollutant deposition threatens sustainability; the development of methods for assessing and monitoring national level criteria and indicators that relate airborne pollution to sustainable forest management; the dissemination of information to the public; the provision of access to existing data by potential users, including managers and policy makers; and technical assistance in order to help build capacity for research.

Proposals for action

50. The Panel:

(a) Encouraged countries to adopt a preventative approach to the reduction of damaging air pollution, which may include long-range

transboundary air pollution, in national strategies for sustainable development;

(b) Encouraged countries to strengthen international cooperation for building scientific knowledge, such as techniques for monitoring and analysing airborne causes of deforestation and forest degradation, and to cooperate in activities related to the impact of air-borne pollution on forest health, including the provision of access to existing data by potential users, including managers and policy makers and the dissemination of information to the public;

(c) Recommended that existing regional programmes monitoring the impact of airborne pollution on forest health in affected countries should continue and be extended to other regions where necessary;

(d) Encouraged the development of methods for the assessment and monitoring of national-level criteria and indicators for airborne pollutants in the context of sustainable forest management;

....
58. The Panel:

....
(b) Urged countries with low forest cover:

....
(vi) In particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, to embark on capacity-building programmes at national, subnational and local levels, including especially existing national institutions, to promote effective participation in decision-making with respect to forests throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes, and taking full advantage of the wealth of traditional knowledge available in the country;

....
71. The Panel:

....
(b) Urged recipient and donor countries to jointly explore, as a priority activity, appropriate indicators for monitoring and evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of forest programmes and projects at the national and local levels, supported by international cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer;

....
89. The Panel:

....
(c) Urged countries, universities and relevant organizations and major groups to strengthen research on forest inventory and monitoring techniques with a view to expanding the scope and improving the quality of forest assessments;

....
94. The Panel:

....

(d) Encouraged countries and regional and international research organizations to extend on-site research and to enhance its prioritization and the application of its results, with the involvement of all interested parties, in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of research so as to enhance its relevance and impact.

....
108. While recognizing that national-level criteria and indicators may play an important role in clarifying issues related to forest certification and the labelling of forest products, the Panel emphasized that the development of criteria and indicators is primarily intended for promoting and monitoring sustainable forest management, and not for imposing certification or labelling schemes for forest products. Criteria and indicators are not performance standards for certifying management at any level, and should not be made a basis for restriction of trade. The Panel also emphasized that criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management should not be used as grounds for conditionality in the provision of ODA.

....
138. The Panel noted the need for enhanced international efforts in a number of interlinked forest-related areas, including effective governance of international institutions, organizations and instruments dealing with forest issues; improved mechanisms for focusing, coordinating and monitoring the activities undertaken by agencies and to implement instruments on international forest-related issues; improved participation of major groups in forest-related forums and processes to promote sustainable forest management; strategic data collection and analysis; projects to strengthen capacity-building, technology transfer and exchange, and human resource development, in particular at the national and field levels; improved coordination between international and bilateral funding agencies; and more focused and effective funding for and coordination of research and development in priority areas concerned with sustainable forest management.

....
147. The Panel examined a number of options for action at the intergovernmental level to continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on all types of forests and to monitor progress in and promote the implementation of the Panel's proposals for action. It proposed the following options, which were not necessarily seen to be mutually exclusive:

(a) To continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests and the consideration of all aspects and programmes aimed at the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests in a holistic manner within existing forums, such as the Commission, FAO and their respective institutional structures, as well as other appropriate international organizations, institutions and instruments;

(b) To continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests through the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental forum on forests under the auspices of the Commission, with a focused and time-limited mandate, charged with, inter alia, reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Panel's proposals for action, and either:

(i) On that basis, considering and advising on the need for other arrangements and mechanisms, including legal arrangements covering all types of forests, and reporting on those matters to the Commission at the appropriate time in its work programme, which has yet to be defined;

and/or:

(ii) Preparing the basis and building the necessary consensus for a decision to negotiate and elaborate possible elements of a legally binding instrument, reporting to the Commission in 1999 on its work;

(c) To carry forward intergovernmental policy action on forests through the establishment, as soon as possible, under the authority of the General Assembly, of an intergovernmental negotiating committee on a legally binding instrument on all types of forest, with a focused and time-limited mandate.

IFF Final Report, Feb. 2000

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Programme Element I.

Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

A. Promoting and facilitating implementation

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7. The Forum took note of the continuing monitoring of the effects of airborne pollutants on forests within member countries of the International Cooperative Programme on Forests (ICP Forests), as well as the establishment of new protocols dealing with nitrogen, heavy metals and persistent pollutants under the Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, as well as the beginning of regional cooperation on a monitoring network on acid rain among countries in Eastern Asia. It noted with appreciation the offer by some countries to extend

their cooperation to interested countries not presently participating in international networks.

....

B. Monitoring progress in implementation

Conclusions

10. IFF recognized that there are various aspects to data collection, monitoring, assessment and reporting. One aspect relates to assessing progress in implementation of the IPF proposals for action in terms of existing and, if appropriate, new legislation, policies, programmes and processes. Another aspect relates to assessing trends in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests as well as the state of forests, and to make the best use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. IFF also recognized that the national implementation of criteria and indicators and assessing progress is affected by enabling conditions and mechanisms, including financial and technical resources. The primary value and benefits of reviewing, monitoring and reporting is at the national level. Efforts should be made to make national data timely, accurate and internationally comparable, as well as transparent and accessible to all interested parties.

11. The collection, assessment, monitoring, organization, reporting and dissemination of data can involve substantial costs and institutional capacity. Therefore, efforts should be made to avoid duplication by utilizing, where appropriate, existing reporting systems of international organizations and instruments, and by harmonizing, where appropriate, existing monitoring and reporting systems.

12. There is a need to build and strengthen institutional, technical and human capacity at the national level to enable periodic monitoring of the state of forests in order to measure and report on policy effectiveness and progress towards sustainable forest management as well as to identify priority areas of action. Monitoring, assessment and reporting activities should be integrated into national forest programmes. Approaches to strengthening national capacities should be practical and cost-effective.

13. Cooperation, coordination and partnership among countries and between countries and organizations would assist capacity-building. In this regard, greater priority should be given by all countries to financial and technical assistance programmes and the transfer of technology to help developing countries to strengthen their capacity for reviewing, monitoring and reporting.

14. There is also a need to develop a better common understanding of key concepts, definitions and terms at both the national and international levels, as well as greater comparability of data that permits aggregation at the regional and global levels.

This would assist countries in meeting the various demands for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on forests by international instruments, multilateral organizations and various regional and international criteria and indicator processes.

15. Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are important tools for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on the state of and trends in all types of forests and for assessing progress towards sustainable forest management. Incorporating the results of criteria and indicators, for instance, in voluntary national reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as to the FAO global forest resources assessment, national forest programmes reporting, and the *State of the World's Forests* reporting, would provide useful bases to assess progress towards management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Proposals for action

16. IFF recalled the IPF proposals for action that are relevant to this category (in particular, E/CN.17/1997/12, paras. 17 (g), 17 (i), 70 (e), 77 (f), 78 (b), 78 (c), 115 (a) and 115 (b)).

17. IFF encouraged countries to:

(a) Prepare national information on the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests as the basis for any consolidated information on forests at the international level. Adequate financial resources, both domestic and international, should be available for capacity-building and implementation of national reporting initiatives;

(b) Make forest-related information for reviewing, monitoring and reporting progress in implementation of sustainable forest management widely available and accessible to policy makers and to interested groups, noting the important role that subnational levels of government and interested groups play in contributing to assessment and information gathering;

(c) Report on the implementation of IPF proposals for action in the context of reporting on forests to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session, taking into account, where appropriate, the process used to assess the relevance of the proposals and priorities for action, the organizations and interested parties involved, and noting progress made and the areas where new actions could be undertaken;

(d) Further develop and implement, with the support of international organizations, as appropriate, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, and use them as a basis for reviewing, monitoring and reporting national trends in the state of forests, as well as progress on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(e) Encourage the donor community to assist developing countries in preparing national information and reports on forests, recognizing that information collection and reporting are costly activities.

18. IFF encouraged ITFF member organizations and other relevant international and regional organizations to consult with countries regarding collection and synthesis of national information in order to facilitate accurate reporting with a view to having countries verify the information synthesized, and give effective feedback on the overall results of data collection and reporting and make such information widely available and accessible to policy makers and to interested groups.

19. IFF encouraged countries, ITFF member organizations and other relevant international and regional organizations to:

Develop harmonized, cost-effective, comprehensive reporting formats for collecting and synthesizing national forest information to meet the diverse demands for reliable and timely data by various forest-related international organizations and instruments. There is a need to incorporate information on relevant criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, including indicators on environmental, social and economic functions, such as non-wood products, forest resources and services, and the competitiveness of forest products at the domestic and international levels, into such reporting formats in order to reduce reporting burdens on countries and increase the timeliness and consistency of reporting;

(b) Improve the effectiveness of coordination and partnership within countries and with international organizations and instruments as a means of building the capacity in developing countries for periodic and timely collection, review, synthesis and utilization of information related to sustainable forest management.

....

38. Recent changes in the markets for forest products, such as those caused by the recent financial crisis, have raised concerns on the ability to continue the implementation of measures aimed at sustainable forest management but have at the same time increased the need for it. The long-term impacts of such unpredictable events on efforts to promote sustainable forest management need examination and monitoring. Such situations highlight the need to develop strategies for sustainable forest management with a long-term perspective so that the negative effects of short-term market changes can be minimized.

....

68. The involvement of indigenous people and local communities (including indigenous people and other forest-dependent people practising traditional lifestyles, forest owners and local communities, many of whom possess important traditional forest-related knowledge; see General Assembly resolution A/S-

19/2, annex, para. 37) and the understanding and use of their traditional knowledge, as well as recognition of their rights to the natural resources in their traditional areas within national laws and jurisdiction, can support the formulation, design, implementation and monitoring of policies towards sustainable forest management. The sharing and application of this knowledge can help interested parties to avoid procedures that impact unfavourably on ecosystems and local social systems. Traditional knowledge can complement new technologies, and might be adapted and used more widely. In this context, IPF recalled relevant IPF proposals for action (in particular, E/CN.17/1997/12, para. 40 (r)).

UNFF First Substantive Session, June 2001

UNFF multi-year programme of work

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B. Monitoring, assessment and reporting

1. *Recognizes* that monitoring, assessment and reporting are among the principal functions of UNFF, and are complementary to implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action as well as related to the overall review of UNFF at its fifth session,

2. *Stressing* the importance of the use of regional and national criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as a basis for reporting on sustainable forest management,

3. *Decides* that UNFF's function of monitoring, assessment and reporting comprises the following areas:

- Progress in implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action,
- Progress towards sustainable management of all types of forests,
- Review of the effectiveness,

4. *Calls upon* member organizations of the CPF to facilitate efforts, including those by countries, to report on the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, and to make easily accessible information on: financial resources, environmentally sound technology, to support national capacity building for forest-related information collecting and reporting in developing countries,

5. *Invites* reporting from countries, regions, organizations and processes based on a credible, voluntary reporting system, with a focus on the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action,

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UNFF Plan of Action for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

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Decision

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2. Invites Ministers to endorse the Plan of Action at the high-level ministerial segment at the second session of the UNFF and consider transmitting it as one of the inputs of the UNFF process to the preparatory committee of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, recognizing that countries will proceed immediately with assessment, prioritization and implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the context of their national priorities

....

5. The target of the Plan of Action is progress on implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and demonstrable progress towards sustainable forest management, by 2005.

Activities at the national level

6. Countries will set their own national priorities, targets and timetables for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and systematically assess and analyze the IPF/IFF proposals for action in their national context.

7. To facilitate the assessment, it may be helpful to cluster the proposals for action according to, *inter alia*, the 16 elements listed in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/4).

8. Countries will develop or strengthen, as appropriate, national forest programmes, as defined in the IPF/IFF proposals for action, or other integrated programs relevant to forests, with the aim of achieving an holistic and comprehensive approach to sustainable forest management.

9. Countries will, on a voluntary basis, report progress towards the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action to the UNFF as soon as possible, and if practicable to the first Ministerial segment of UNFF.

10. Countries will endeavour to involve relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action at the national level.

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Elements

15. The following 16 elements are an important tool for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

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1. Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes

....

10. Monitoring, assessment and reporting; and concepts, terminology and definitions

....

Activities Related to Reporting

22. Reporting on progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action is based on voluntary reporting, including by sub-regional and regional groups and processes, drawing upon existing formats, as appropriate.

23. Voluntary reporting by countries, regions, organizations and processes on their implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action should include achievements and identify gaps and obstacles to implementation, *inter alia*, on means of implementation. The reports may be prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Such voluntary reports would start at second session of the UNFF.

24. Relevant stakeholders are encouraged to provide reports on their contribution to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

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