

United Nations Forum on Forests
Minutes of the First post UNFF11 Meeting of the Bureau of the Eleventh Session
13 November 2015 (10:00 am-1:00 pm, 2:30-7:30 pm)- New York

Participation

Bureau Members: Mr. Wu Zhimin (China), Mr. Srecko Juricic (Croatia), Mr. Heikki Granholm (Finland), Mr. Vicente Bezerra (Brazil)

UNFF Secretariat: Mr. Manoel Sobral Filho, Mr. Hossein Moeini-Meybodi, Ms. Afsa Kemitale-Rothschild, Ms. Njeri Kariuki, Mr. Ryo Nakamura, Mr. Tomasz Juszczak

Secretary of the Forum: Mr. Moncef Khane and his Deputy, Ms. Sangeeta Sharma

Others: H.E. Mr. Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Permanent Representative of Gabon), Mr. Jean-Pierre-Hemery Doumbeneny Ndzigna (Mission of Gabon), Ms. Emilia Van Veen (Mission of Finland)

Summary of Key Actions/Decisions

- 1. Subject to the decision of the Chair of UNFF, a letter will be addressed to the President of ECOSOC to seek the assistance of the Council to authorize the convening of a half-day organizational session of the Forum to:**
 - (a) Elect members of the UNFF12 Bureau**
 - (b) Recommend the date and venue of UNFF12**
 - (c) Adopt the provisional agenda for UNFF12**
- 2. The first meeting of AHEG which was originally scheduled to be held from 20 to 22 January 2016, is now postponed and will be held from 25 to 27 April 2016 in New York.**
- 3. The deadline for submission of views and proposals by Member States and stakeholders on the IAF strategic plan and the first quadrennial programme of work of the Forum (2017-2020) is now extended to 15 January 2016.**
- 4. The next meetings of the Bureau will be held in March 2016 in Japan and, in conjunction with AHEG1 in April 2016 in New York.**

Provisional Agenda

First post UNFF11 Meeting of the Bureau of the Eleventh Session

13 November 2015 (10:00 am-1:00 pm, 2:30-7:30 pm) - New York

- 1- Opening
- 2- Review of post-UNFF11 and/or UNFF12 Bureau situation
- 3- Review of implementation of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33, including key intersessional activities:
 - a. Update on implementation of the provisions of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015, *inter alia*:
 - i. Status of the adoption of modifications to the UN Forest Instrument by the General Assembly;
 - ii. Paragraph 16c on MAR
 - iii. Paragraph 17b(iv) and 36 on the coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contribution to the HLPF;
 - iv. Paragraph 22 on the CPF
 - v. Paragraph 26 on regional and sub-regional involvement; and
 - vi. Paragraph 33 on the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders
 - b. Preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1)
 - i. Preparatory work, including preparation of a paper with elements for a strategic plan;
 - ii. Views by Member States and other stakeholders on matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33;
 - iii. Nomination of AHEG Co-Chairs;
 - iv. Date, venue and documentation;
 - v. Nomination of experts and level of available XB funding for travel support.
 - c. PBIs of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33
- 4- Progress report on the operationalization of the GFFFN and its activities since UNFF11
- 5- Update on the recent and upcoming events
- 6- Future meeting(s) of the Bureau
- 7- Other matters
 - i. The status of the UNFF Trust Fund and the estimated required resources to fund intersessional activities.
- 8- Closing

1. Opening

At the request of the Chair of UNFF11, H.E. Mr. Noel Messone (Gabon), Mr. Vicente Bezerra chaired the meeting as Acting Chair and welcomed Bureau Members and participants to the meeting. He informed that Mr. Messone was not able to attend the meeting and had asked him to preside over the Bureau meeting. The provisional agenda of the first meeting was adopted. The Bureau welcomed the participation Mr. H.E. Mr. Baudelaire Ndong Ella (Permanent Representative of Gabon).

2. Review of post-UNFF11 and/or UNFF12 Bureau situation

The Bureau invited the Secretary of the Forum to provide information about the respective rules of procedure on the status of the UNFF11 Bureau.

The Secretary of the Forum reiterated the clarifications he had provided in his communications to the Bureau on the status of the UNFF11 Bureau. He referred to his letter dated 31 July 2015 in which he confirmed that that Officers of the Forum were expected to hold office until their successors are elected in accordance with Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). He also informed that the status of the Chair would remain unchanged unless the Chair were to resign his position prior to the election of his successor. He clarified that while one of the Vice-Chairs may be designated to act as the Chair, should the Chair be temporarily absent. The Chairperson of the UNFF12 Bureau shall be decided on the basis of equitable geographical rotation. He reiterated that should all Bureau Members resign their position, regional groups would be invited to nominate candidates for election as officers of UNFF12 who, as per past practice, will act as the *de facto* Bureau until their election at the first meeting of UNFF12 in accordance with Rule 15 of the Rule of Procedures. Thus, a resignation of all members would have the same practical effect as an election. He also confirmed that should any Member of the Bureau resign their position, he would upon receipt of a formal communication to that effect send letters to the chair of the regional groups to invite them to nominate endorsed candidates for election as Officers of UNFF12. The Secretary of the Forum, however, informed that he has not received any letter of resignation from any member of the UNFF11 Bureau.

The Bureau thanked the Secretary of the Forum for his explanation. The Bureau Members also noted that “election of UNFF12 Bureau members” was not the only organizational matter that was not addressed at the end of UNFF11. The Bureau noted other organizational matters regarding UNFF12, namely decision on the date, venue, and provisional agenda for UNFF12 could not be addressed immediately after UNFF11. Such actions were neither taken at the time of the adoption of the UNFF11 outcome by the ECOSOC in July 2015. The Bureau members expressed concerns that the lack of decision on the organizational matters related to UNFF12, namely the date, venue, provisional agenda of UNFF12, and the election of UNFF12 Bureau, pose a significant risk to delay implementation of the provisions of the ECOSOC Resolution 2015/33, and, in particular, the intersessional activities. The Bureau requested the UNFF Secretariat to inform about similar experiences in the past and the actions the Forum/Bureau took to address the problems. The Secretary of the Forum clarified that the first meeting of UNFF12 could not be convened upon the conclusion of UNFF11 as a decision of ECOSOC to extend the Forum’s mandate was a prerequisite to convening the first meeting of UNFF12; regarding the date and venue of UNFF12, he advised that such a decision would be taken by the Council in due course

and did not require a recommendation by the Forum; in respect to the provisional agenda, he stressed that provisional agendas were, as a matter of course, prepared by the Secretariat and formally adopted at the outset of a session; in view of the fact that the outcome of the Working Group established in accordance with paragraphs 46-47 of Council resolution 2015/33, a provisional agenda should hence not be adopted prior to the conclusion of the proceedings of the Working Group.

The UNFF Secretariat draw the attention of the Bureau to the well-established practice by the Forum in dealing with the adoption of the provisional agenda of its upcoming session. Accordingly, all provisional agendas of the previous sessions of the Forum have always been adopted by the Forum itself and well in advance of the upcoming session of the Forum, in order to

submitting its input particularly on the role of functional commissions in the thematic review at the HLPF.

Regarding paragraph 22 on the CPF, CPF members will discuss key issues and options for the implementation of the resolution related to the Partnership based on written inputs in the upcoming working meeting scheduled to take place on 3 December 2015, on the margins of the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris.

Regarding paragraph 26 on regional and sub-regional involvement, relevant regional and sub-regional organizations have been invited to provide inputs on the IAF strategic plan.

Regarding paragraph 33 on the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development has nominated a focal point and an alternate focal point for the business and industries major groups.

b. Preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1)

The UNFF Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the preparations for the first meeting of the ad hoc expert group (AHEG1) scheduled to be convened from 20-22 January 2016 at UNHQ in New York. There have been nomination of experts from 30 developing countries and 4 developed countries to date. The Bureau was reminded that the resolution specifies that the AHEG is to conduct its meetings subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources. The Bureau was also informed that there has been no extrabudgetary funding so far to support the travel of eligible experts for participation in AHEG1. Lack of availability of funding would impact negatively a balanced representation of countries at AHEG1. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that the nomination of the candidate for a Co-Chair from the South has been received whereas the North is yet to nominate its candidate. 14 Member States, and two regional organizations submitted their views on matters referred to in paragraph 44 of the resolution. These views will be compiled and submitted electronically to AHEG1. The Secretariat also informed that it has prepared a Note for AHEG1. This Note contains background information on the mandate of the AHEG, as well as the outcomes of recent major conferences and their interlinkages with the work of the AHEG.

The Secretariat further briefed on its activities, noting that it commissioned a study on possible elements for the strategic plan to senior consultants and the study will be ready in December 2015. It was added that the Secretariat, in collaboration with Japan, was planning to hold a small expert panel meeting, to discuss this elements paper, in advance of AHEG1 in November 2015. However, this could not be materialized due to the logistical constraints resulting from the blackout period for the deployment of the new operations system across the UN Secretariat, which continue to affect the logistical preparations of the meetings, including AHEG1. The Secretariat further informed the Bureau that this expert panel meeting is now scheduled to be held in Japan, sometime in March 2016.

c. PBIs of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33

The UNFF Secretariat provided updates on the consideration of the programme budget implications (PBIs) of the ECOSOC resolution 2015/33 at the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. The ACABQ considered PBIs of the resolution, including four additional posts to deliver the new mandate, on 26 October and is in the process of submitting its report to the Fifth Committee for their consideration.

representation at the upcoming events, including the forty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission scheduled to be convened in March 2016 and the meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) scheduled to be convened in July 2016.

6. Future meeting(s) of the Bureau

The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on the margins of the meeting of the expert panel scheduled to be convened in March 2016 in Japan, to be followed by a meeting of the Bureau during AHEG1 in April 2016 at UNHQ in New York.

7. Other matters

The Secretariat provided the oral and written briefing on the available