

COUNTDOWN

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This eighth and final issue of Countdown Forests 97 examines international agreements and institutional arrangements in the global forest policy dialogue.

1997 was supposed to be the year for major political decisions on safeguarding the future of the world's forests. Yet the main decision to emerge in 1997 – at the June UNGASS meeting of the world's governments and heads of state – has been to postpone those decisions until further talks are held. As Countdown Forests 97 publishes its last issue, the countdown to global action to save the world's forests has largely been extended to future meetings. Similarly, little progress has been made in other pressing areas such as climate change, biodiversity and desertification.

In this issue, a range of initiatives related to international agreements and institutional arrangements is reviewed, including the recent UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) and earlier initiatives such as the IUCN World Conservation Congress workshop on international forest policy processes, and the Swiss-Peruvian Initiative on gaps and overlaps in international forest-related institutions.

Discussions of international agreements and institutional arrangements relating to forests usually fall into one of three categories: a legally binding convention or other international agreement on forests, the reform of international institutions dealing with forests, and a greater international role for civil society in setting forest policy.

Of these topics, the inter-governmental discussions at the 1995-1997 Inter-governmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and the subsequent UNGASS meeting were dominated by the question of if and when to launch a legally-binding international agreement on forests. In contrast, the independent dialogue of the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development (WCFSD) has focused more on the need for reform of international institutions dealing with forests and for greater civil society involvement in setting forest policy at all levels.

Within the inter-governmental dialogue, little headway has been made in reviewing the adequacy of existing international arrangements for managing forests. The Swiss-Peruvian Initiative charged with making an appropriate appraisal was unable to produce any definitive

recommendations. The UNGASS discussions on forests, despite being dominated by the convention question, were ultimately also inconclusive on the future of a legally-binding agreement. Governments remain highly divided on how best to proceed on international agreements and institutional arrangements, and plan to revisit the issues in future meetings of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) over the next two or three years.

At the WCFSD regional hearings and in the non-governmental community more generally, there is widespread skepticism over the ability of governments to deliver sustainable forest management without better involving civil society – whether local communities, NGOs or the private sector – in decision-making on forests. The issue is one of continued 'top-down' decision-making by governments and powerful commercial interests versus more 'bottom-up' approaches involving broader segments of society. Seen from this perspective, sustainable forest management ultimately depends on the establishment of stronger democratic decision-making processes and other mechanisms for balancing the pressure of powerful vested interests with the wishes of the rest of society. The potential usefulness of a legally-binding international agreement would depend on its implementation within a wider democratic system, in addition, of course to its content.

Given the problems faced in implementing already-existing international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – which specifies elements such as "equitable sharing of benefits", "key role of indigenous peoples and local communities" and "economically and socially sound incentives" – it is not at all clear that a forest convention would do any better. Figure 1 reviews the key

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IISD'S BRIEFINGS SERIES ON INTERNATIONAL FOREST POLICY LEADING UP TO THE SPRING 1997 SESSION OF THE U.N. COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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forest-related elements of existing international agreements, many of which are still routinely ignored.

Figure 1. Some key elements of existing international agreements relating to forests

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- integration of conservation and sustainable use into national decision-making
- environmental impact assessments
- protected areas
- key role of indigenous peoples and local communities
- economically and socially sound incentives
- sustainable use
- equitable sharing of benefits

Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC)

- carbon sequestration potential of forests
- common but differentiated responsibilities of developing and developed countries
- developed country financing of the 'agreed full incremental cost' of certain developing country commitments
- precautionary principle

Convention to Combat Desertification

- holistic, participatory and bottom-up approach
- integrated, cross-sectoral approach
- partnership agreements between countries and the international community
- human-needs-centred strategies
- comprehensive forest strategies at the national and international levels

—from Aarti Gupta (1995), *Combating Deforestation: The Role of Existing Agreements*. UNDP/MacArthur Foundation.

Ultimately, the slow progress of the intergovernmental community in addressing the issues of international agreements and institutional arrangements may be due to a 'democratic deficit' within the international forest policy dialogue itself. The impasse which has existed between developed and developing countries since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit over international financial and technology transfers for implementing sustainable forest management in poorer countries suggests deeper inequities in the international political and economic balance of power. If this power imbalance did not exist, opposition to a forest convention would likely be much less. And if international organizations were more representative of the civil societies they represent, NGOs and others would likely not be agitating for increased civil society involvement to the same degree they are now.

What is needed more than ever is an honest reckoning. An equitable solution to these international issues will require, above all, a new sense of fairness in the international dialogue on forests. As the past five years have shown, legalistic caution alone is not enough to achieve a successful international outcome. A renewed spirit of mutual cooperation and concern may be the only hope. ☺

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

1. UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION

New York

June 23-27, 1997

A special high-level session of the UN was convened to review progress in implementing the sustainable development program of Agenda 21

set in Rio in 1992. In forests as in other areas, the general conclusion was that little progress has been made and much more needs to be done. On the issue of international political reforms necessary for sustainability in the forest area, the question of whether to have a legally-binding international agreement on forests dominated, but a final decision was postponed until at least 2000. Other pressing international political questions received much less attention, such as how to improve the effectiveness of international organizations charged with promoting and overseeing sustainable forest management internationally, and how to increase the involvement of civil society in setting truly democratic international forest policy.

Forests proved to be one of the main issues of discussion at the recent UN General Assembly Special Session, alongside climate change and global financing for sustainable development. The much-anticipated meeting marking the fifth anniversary of the historic 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro – was seen by many observers as an opportunity for a political breakthrough among 53 attending heads of state and an even larger number of cabinet ministers, unencumbered by the normal constraints of higher-level governmental approvals. By the close of the week-long session, however, national governments had agreed to do little more than continue talking about forests.

Heralded by some as a breakthrough, the outcome demonstrates the low ebb in political will which exists among national governments on international forest policy issues. This was further evidenced by the disintegration of the planned Political Statement of the meeting as a whole. Five years after Rio, industrialized and non-industrialized countries still cannot agree to a



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common path out of the global forest crisis.

As in prior meetings, the question of an international forest convention – 'to be or not to be' – attracted enormous attention. With the EU, Canada, Russia, Central America, Romania and Papua New Guinea pushing for a convention, and others like the USA, Japan, the G-77 and China, New Zealand, Australia and a broad coalition of NGOs opposed, the issue saw more heat than light. The outcome was an uneasy agreement to continue to disagree and revisit the issue in the year 2000, following the report of the Inter-governmental Forum on Forests or IFF, the successor body to the 1995-1997 Inter-governmental Panel on Forests or IPF.

Compared with the issue of a legally-binding international agreement on forests, the 'other' international political issues of international institutional reforms and greater civil society involvement received little attention. Regarding international institutions, decisions on a full and impartial review of the 'gaps and overlaps' in existing institutional arrangements were left unresolved. The UNGASS result was simply a decision to continue to consider the issue in the IFF and, in the meanwhile, to encourage continued informal collaboration of major international organizations, such as the FAO, UNDP, ITTO and UNEP, in the two-year-old Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests established during the IPF process.

Even more muted was the attention given to the future role of civil society in setting international forest policy. Much was made of the fact that, for the first time in history, NGO representatives were allowed to participate freely in the UNGASS proceedings alongside

heads of state and government. But less was made of the issue that simply allowing NGOs with sufficient resources and knowledge of UN participation procedures to make interventions at inter-governmental meetings does not, in and of itself, constitute a democratic approach to international decision-making on forests. Ultimately, control still remains with participating governments, many of which do not practice inclusive and participatory styles of decision-making on forests at home. For groups including many indigenous peoples and the one billion of the Earth's inhabitants who live in absolute poverty, such token approaches to international decision-making effectively mean that they have no voice in setting global forest-related policy.

2. IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL FOREST POLICY PROCESSES

Montreal, Canada, October 18, 1996
Co-sponsored by IUCN-US and IISD

A lively workshop was held to assess the progress and future direction of the international forest policy dialogue, drawing on a wide range of participants from across the inter-governmental and non-governmental sectors. Both panelists and participants agreed that the achievement of sustainable forest management is primarily a political rather than a technical endeavour. The inter-governmental IPF and successor dialogues were seen as crucial for advancing action by national governments, while the independent WCFSD dialogue was seen as essential for addressing those issues which currently remain too politically-

sensitive for national governments to address head-on.

The World Conservation Congress workshop on "International Forest Policy Processes" provided an opportunity to review the expected outputs of the international dialogue on forests, drawing on participation from a wide range of processes and perspectives, including the United Nations' IPF, the independent WCFSD, industry, and the NGO and international development agency communities.

The half-day workshop was chaired by Angela Cropper, a Senior Adviser to the United Nations Development Program, and the panelists included Manuel Rodriguez, Co-Chair of the IPF; Ola Ullsten, Co-Chair of the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development; Jean-Pierre Martel, Director of Forest Policy at the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, and Bill Mankin, Director of the US NGO coalition, the Global Forest Policy Project. David Cassells of the World Bank served as a respondent.

There was general consensus among the panelists and other participants alike that the challenge of sustainable forest management is primarily political rather than technical, and that the broad range of on-going international forest policy processes – from the IPF, WCFSD to the Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification Conventions – was helping to stimulate increased political and public attention on forest-related issues. The post-Rio shift in emphasis from the need for sustainable forest development in tropical forests alone to all forests, including those in the temperate and boreal zones, was also widely welcomed as an improvement in the balance and objectivity of the dialogue.



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Regarding the various international forest policy processes themselves, there was broad agreement that the inter-governmental and independent processes are fulfilling complementary roles – that while the inter-governmental IPF and successor dialogues are needed to help advance progress toward sustainable forest management among governments, the independent WCFSD dialogue is helping to pinpoint solutions to those issues which are still too politically-sensitive to be dealt with immediately by governments. The list of politically 'taboo' or difficult subjects at the IPF included: land tenure; land use; corruption; global financing for sustainable forest management; international transfers of environmentally-sound technologies (ESTs) to developing countries; the future role and structure of international forest-related organizations; democratic decision-making on forests, and the lack of political will itself. The final report of the WCFSD, due in January 1998, is expected to advance strong recommendations in these politically-difficult areas.

Audio recordings of the two main speeches at the workshop, delivered by Manuel Rodriguez of the IPF and Ola Ullsten of the WCFSD, can be accessed from IISD's website, IISDnet. (See Further Readings and Speeches on the Internet.)

Conclusions of the IUCN World Conservation Congress workshop (October, 1996)

- Many of the underlying causes of deforestation are not being addressed by inter-governmental processes.
- The lack of political will at the national level is a major problem which can be addressed by developing a civil society constituency for forest conservation.

- Debate over continuance of the IPF and/or pursuit of a global forest convention could detract from implementation of existing agreements and other concrete actions. Regional agreements may be more promising since the players are likely to have more in common.

- Global needs (e.g. biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration) need to be reconciled with national sovereignty.

- International policy dialogues have a big influence on less-developed country national policy development. This is not fully appreciated by NGOs and developed countries. The international forest policy processes are providing needed external pressure for change.

– from IUCN, *World Conservation – Making the Union Relevant. (Special Double Issue – Montreal Congress.) Volume 28, Numbers 1–2. January – June, 1997.*

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3. THE SWISS-PERUVIAN INITIATIVE

March–July, 1996
An IPF inter-sessional initiative
Sponsored by the Governments of Switzerland and Peru

This international undertaking intended to reveal the major 'institutional linkages, gaps, areas requiring enhancement, and any areas of duplication' in international forest governance. The Swiss-Peruvian Initiative was launched for this

purpose and tabled its report in July 1996. Unfortunately, however, it fell short of its mark. While the report pinpoints a number of areas where current international governance remains deficient – such as land tenure and agrarian reforms – it fails to offer a coherent recommendation concerning what needs to be done to rectify the problem areas. A lack of time to conduct the initiative is one likely reason for the shortcomings; others include the political sensitivity of the task at hand, as well as the participation in the initiative of many of the very organizations being reviewed. This latter 'self-review' arrangement in particular may have resulted in a lack of adequate objectivity and distance.

The Swiss-Peruvian initiative proceeded with the participation of fifteen government-nominated experts forming the nucleus of an Independent Expert Group. This Group was supplemented by the full participation of three NGO representatives, themselves independently nominated, as well as the advisory participation of nine representatives of those key external agencies and conventions under review. The Group met only twice, in early March and late June of 1996, and then tabled its report in July in preparation for the September session of the IPF.

Much of the report is devoted to a routine review of the official mandates and functions of key forest-related institutions and instruments. Only the final section of the report, entitled 'Assessment and Independent Expert Group Statements' focuses more specifically on the challenge at hand. Unfortunately, however, this section is more a collection of independently-held opinions of group members than a coherent vision from which international action and reform might follow. From the mix of statements, a few leap out in

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terms of their boldness and political content. The Selected Statements section below presents some of these more 'quotable' quotes. Still, the statements read more like a review of IPF issues in general than a review of the role of international institutions and instruments in addressing these issues *per se*.

The final result is an inconclusive and fragmented analysis, offering little in the way of a useful appraisal of or future direction for international organizations in the forest arena.

Selected Statements from the Report of the Independent Expert Group of the Swiss-Peruvian Initiative on Forests (July, 1996)

- *Numerous gaps*: "The Independent Expert Group (IEG), while looking into the programmes, projects and activities reported by organizations and other concerned bodies recognized that some of those programmes, projects or activities are not necessarily involving all regions, countries or types of forests and are not always as successful, timely and efficient as they are expected to be."
- *Understanding versus action*: "... a difference should be made between programmes and activities which examine an area as compared to those which lead to addressing the problem. Therefore while most organizations selected for review seem to produce information regarding the IPF programme areas, as they relate to their respective terms of reference, and many have specific policies related to those areas, they are less successful in helping the countries to implement them on the ground through concrete assistance."
- *The World Bank and Regional Banks*: "In some cases bank policies on other sectors of economy are encouraging conflicting situations as related to sustainable forest management."

- *Continuation of international dialogue on forests*: "The IEG identified the need for enhanced international high-level dialogue on forest issues. It also noted the value of the ongoing dialogue within the frame of the IPF and stressed the need to ensure continuation of this dialogue which includes major groups."
- *National- and international-level responsibility for land use plans*: "It is clear that wherever the need for land use plans is referred or underlined, the responsibility for its formulation and implementation still lies with the national authorities and organizations. Many developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDC), will need appropriate information, transfer of technology, technical cooperation and financial assistance for their formulation and implementation."
- *Local involvement in planning*: "The IEG underlined the importance of taking forest's into consideration when developing these land use plans and the need to ensure local participation in their formulation."
- *Cross-sectoral planning*: "The IEG expressed its concern for the fact that most national and international activities in forestry planning are still too focused on the narrow view of forests as a timber producing resource while paying little attention to other goods and services produced by the forests, and to the social and ecological aspects of sustainable forest management, as referred in the Forest Principles. The IEG pointed out that cross-sectoral analysis of national forestry and land-use plans in developed countries was needed."
- *FAO and the World Bank*: "In both the World Bank and the FAO there is a lack of a cross-sectoral approach."
- *FAO*: "FAO's Committee on Forestry (COFO) was considered to be dominated by forestry industry specialists, which reinforce the narrow sectoral approach ... the FAO budget is discussed by repre-

sentatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, which in most cases do not prioritize forests."

- *Land tenure and local participation*: "Land tenure issues as they relate to landless farmers, indigenous peoples and forest dwellers need increased attention by international organizations as well as adequate mechanisms and structures to ensure local participation within the decision-making process."
- *Underlying causes of deforestation*: "... concrete action geared towards reversing the current trends has not been successful enough ... the IEG perceived a lack of clear mandates, coordination and action in this area and the need to fill the gap. Clear action oriented decisions in these area[s] are urgently needed."
- *Land and agrarian reforms*: "It was noted that the conversion of forests to agricultural lands by displaced and landless peasants was an urgent problem requiring an institutional response. The lack of an international agency effectively assisting national agrarian reforms was noted. Although an international declaration expressing a commitment to agrarian reform (the Peasants' Charter) had been adopted by 145 countries in 1979, and had become a central aspect of FAO's work, the programme has been virtually abandoned. Landlessness, on the other hand, has increased. The World Bank also argues that it cannot finance agrarian reforms and no longer applies its 1976 policy on land reform."
- *Trade-related issues*: "The long term effects of WTO provisions as they relate to this process, should be closely monitored. UNCTAD is working on equitable conditions in forest products trade, combined with sustainable forest management practices, which could be a significant tool in reverting [sic] the deforestation process."
- *Protection and use of traditional forest-related knowledge*: "This programme area, even though highly relevant to sustainable forest management, has been insufficiently

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developed within the international organizations' programmes ... The subject should be specifically incorporated in the mandates and programmes of the most relevant international organizations ... The benefits of the utilizations of traditional knowledge should revert in some way to the guardians of that know-how."

- "It was noted that a prior condition to the protection of indigenous and traditional knowledge, is the need to protect communities rights and access to land, resources and the recognition of their own institutions. Only ILO 169 convention touches upon this issue, although the OAS and the UN are considering draft declarations on [sic] this regard."

- *Technology transfer*: "Technology transfer appears to be the area given the least attention by international organizations."

- *Coordination*: "The IEG believe that there is an increasing need for better coordination between multilateral agencies, funding sources and bilateral donors at the national level. The international systems should secure additional funding from public and private sources and develop strategies and innovative procedures. The significant efforts in funding made at the local level should be better assessed in order to provide a more balanced picture of the efforts being made. Non-monetary contributions done by local communities should be considered in this analysis."

- *Inter-convention/FAO cooperation*: "The IEG noted that it would be mutually beneficial and enriching to ensure effective cooperation between FAO's forest resource assessment programme and the initiative to harmonize reporting requirements under various Convention[s], particularly CBD, FCCC and CCD."

- *Criteria & indicators and people's rights*: "It was noted that most forests are inhabited. In order to be in accordance with the Forest

Principles and Agenda 21 criteria and indicators processes must take into account the rights and interests of these peoples."

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"IN DIALOGUE"

This section captures some of the wide range of opinions which prevail on the subject of international agreements and institutional arrangements for the sustainable management of forests. It features quotes gathered from interviews, written records and public statements which serve to further highlight the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

Selected Recommendations of the IUCN Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management to the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests (August, 1996)

- We urge ... that a mechanism be established to monitor the relationship between deforestation patterns and social-institutional and political changes at the national level. Such a mechanism could evaluate trends in policy shifts that allow for a greater involvement of communities and other private initiatives in the sustainable management of state forest lands. At the same time, the program would examine local grassroots initiatives, driven by environmental and livelihood concerns, which are evolving new and innovative forms of forest management that currently go unrecognized, but have important and promising implications for the future management of these

resources, especially in nations with growing demographic pressures.

- We urge the establishment of new linkages between country-level policy working groups and other regional networks to reinforce the political will of nations and guide their efforts to formulate innovative and enabling national policies that create new partnerships between forest-dependent communities, private sector interests and government agencies.

— from IUCN Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management submission to IPF-3.

Non-timber forest products

"We only have timber trade organizations, and none on non-timber ... The institution(s) [on non-timber forest products] should be developed in consultation with forest farmers, NGOs, and the private sector, which represent social, economical and ecological perspectives."

— from LATIN (Indonesia) submission to IPF-3

Political will

"This is the time when it becomes especially clear whether governments have (or lack) the political will to halt and reverse the loss and degradation of forests and woodlands ... As part of the effort to help move the IPF process forward, Greenpeace offers the following ideas and proposed initiatives: 1) Effectively implement within existing instruments ... spending lots of time talking about or negotiating a new instrument, now, risks diverting attention from the critical need for more immediate forest-related solutions, 2) Empower existing international institutions/instruments ... governments should use the IPF process, constructively, to lay down markers for effective action ... , 3) Create an ongoing interagency coordination mechanism ... the IPF Interagency Task Force, based on observations of some of its partici-

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pants and observers, may be a good 'model' for continued interagency forest coordination, 4) Convene periodic, broader monitoring and review sessions ... there need to be periodic international gatherings of governments, international agencies, and major groups with an interest in forest matters, at least every two years, 5) Better donor coordination is required ... one helpful step in achieving donor coordination might be to convene a global 'Summit' on forestry-related financing before the end of 1997 ... , 6) Governments need to put their cards on the table ... some government delegates left behind in their capitols the political will on behalf of their governments to commit to or show the way forward toward effective next steps ... there are real risks in brinkmanship policy"

— from *Greenpeace submission, IPF-3*

International agencies

"... huge gaps ... exist in the work of international agencies: ... they are not working with major groups effectively, they are not acting to promote land security for indigenous peoples and other forest-based communities and they are not acting to curb deforestation by promoting participatory agrarian reforms outside forests."

— from *World Rainforest Movement submission, IPF-3*

Government vigilance

"While Government deregulation may well be a rapidly developing trend, we must not rely upon corporate self-regulation to solve the current problems of the world's forests ... I would like to reiterate the need for ongoing and enhanced regulatory vigilance on the part of Governments, UN agencies and other multilateral bodies. Without such effective international governance, the related goals of sustainable forest management and global social justice may never be realised."

— from *UNED-UK (NGO) submission, IPF-3*

Continued international dialogue

"... the Group of 77 and China ... would welcome an international forum to continue advance and dialogue on the issues that pertain to this Panel"

— from *G-77/China submission, IPF-3*

Forest ombudsman

"I propose the creation of a forest commission in all parliaments to look out for the national public interest. From this commission could derive an ombudsman for forests to protect the interests of the people and of communities, for example to ensure that transnational companies obey the rules of the game of other national jurisdictions."

— from *submission of Alicia Barcena, UNEP Global Urban Environment Program, to WCFSD Latin American and Caribbean Regional Hearing, San Jose, Costa Rica, December 1996*

International leadership

"Improvements in effectiveness of UN and other international interventions related to forests are feasible, both on North-South axes and globally. Some essential elements will be: improved strategic data and information, and improved global communications; to maintain operational focus on national forest land use plans, some revitalization of NFAP process will be essential (by whatever name); a new international cooperation framework (including eventual treaties/conventions) to set operational guidelines, adjustable over time; greater private sector participation, in the widest sense (NGO through investment); more focused (operational, forest-responsible) government participation; clear links to related agriculture,

environment, and broad socio-economic issues."

— from *Leadership in World Forestry, a draft CIDA discussion paper, late 1996*

Legally-binding instrument

"The fragmentation of the forest agenda, which is perhaps the biggest barrier, must be brought to an end ... More than any other mechanism, a conference of forest parties under a legally-binding agreement would bring about effective and integrated governance of the forest agenda by the forest community ... Canada remains committed to the negotiation of an international convention on forests, balancing all forests and all forest values, linked with other relevant instruments."

— from *Canadian government submission to IPF-3*

"The analysis and discussions in the IPF have shown that if all the social, economic, trade, environment, development and financial and technology issues are dealt with in one framework, long term progress towards sustainable forest management will be greatly enhanced. The EU believes that one way to achieve this, which has many potential benefits, could be through a convention covering all aspects necessary to promote the sustainable management of all forests."

— from *EU submission, IPF-3*

"We are fed up with environment-and-development-related conventions because these conventions are only papers that have not been fulfilled. If you go in the direction of a forest convention, with all these ifs, ands and buts, then it's just designed to fail. The game is to do the least and make it look like the most. It's a joke. It's not a moral process."

— from *anonymous interview, IPF-3*

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the Convention on Biological Diversity alternative

"Some participants in international forest policy discussions believe that the sheer number and frequency of international discussions on forest policy is itself becoming a problem and a distraction from operational programs. There is a need to seek opportunities for consolidation and grouping a significant portion of the forest-related policy discussions under the CBD may be a partial solution."

— from IUCN submission, IPF-3

"Very few countries would go for an optional protocol under the CBD, especially countries for whom forests are an important economic consideration. Now forests are dealt with in forestry or natural resource departments. But the CBD is dealt with by environment ministers. An optional protocol could be seen as a way of taking control away from forest ministers."

— from anonymous interview, IPF-3

A community perspective

"The overcentralization of nation states and companies is contributing to deforestation because forest cutting occurs by people who don't know the cultural value of those local forests. Decentralization of governments and companies can contribute to the conservation of forests. If you don't decentralize to allow the local people to monitor the forest cutting, then this may lead to forest losses."

— from interview with Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa representative, IPF-3

International solidarity

"Despite the enormous proliferation of conventions, international solidarity on environmental action is in decline ... The most powerful countries are not doing enough. The IPF, the CBD, the Convention on Desertification ... won't mean anything unless there exists enough political will, both nationally and internationally ..."

— from speech by Manuel Rodriguez, Co-Chair, IPF (Colombia), IUCN World Conservation Congress workshop, Montreal, October 18, 1996 (see Further Readings on the Internet).

International forest policy processes

"The key task of the international dialogue on forests is to generate sufficient political pressure to deal with a range of political issues affecting forests, including land reforms, corruption, negative government incentives, short-term thinking, and a lack of capacity of governments to implement policies, however well-intended ... Processes [like the IPF and WCFSD] are trend setters: it's difficult for governments to resist these forces once unleashed ... The IPF can establish how much governments can agree on today. The WCFSD can look further ahead and answer deeper, more politically sensitive questions ..."

— from speech by Ola Ullsten, Co-Chair, WCFSD (Sweden), IUCN World Conservation Congress workshop, Montreal, October 18, 1996 (see Further Readings on the Internet). 3

Further Readings and Speeches on the Internet

Report of the UN General Assembly Special Session and much more *Linkages* coverage of the international forest negotiations

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages>

IUCN World Conservation Congress workshop on international forest policy processes – speeches in audio format, and more

<http://iisd.ca/forests/>

The World Resources Institute assesses international leadership on forests

<http://www.wri.org/wri/biodiv/intl-ive.html>

Intergovernmental Panel on Forests – official documentation of the UN meetings

<http://www.un.org/dpcsd/dsd/ipf.htm>

World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development – background papers and updates on hearings

<http://iisd.ca/wcfsd/>

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 IISD appreciates the generous financial sponsorship for this issue by the Ministry of Forests of British Columbia, Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service, and the Canadian Pulp & Paper Association.

