

Central African forest law enforcement

FAO/OIBT/COMIFAC Sub-Regional Workshop on Forest Law Enforcement in Central Africa

9–11 January 2007

Libreville, Gabon

This three-day regional workshop included participants from the forest and fauna administrations, civil society and private sector of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) member countries (Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tomé & Principe, and Chad) and from donor organizations. Its objective was to promote a multi-stakeholder dialogue and the exchange of experiences among COMIFAC member countries on best practices for improving law compliance in the forest sector. The expected outputs were: better understanding of the causes and effects of non-compliance with law in the forest sector as far as rural poverty, sustainable forest management and forest ecosystem conservation are concerned; exchange on alternatives that exist in the sub-region to deal with the problem of illegal activities; identification of key strategies and actions to improve forest law enforcement in respective countries; reinforcing existing regional networks and initiatives for improving forest law enforcement.

The workshop emphasized the presentation of countries' experiences and reflections in working groups on three main themes: sector policies and legal framework, structures and institutional mechanisms for civil society participation, and technology and information. The exchange of experiences was enriched by general presentations based on the FAO/ITTO document *Best practices for improving law compliance in the forest sector*.

The main outcomes of the workshop include: stronger ownership of the forest law enforcement process in the Central Africa sub-region; deeper commitment of the public sector, private sector and civil society to collaborate; and greater awareness of the need to go from meetings and workshop recommendations to concrete actions. The participants recommended the following priority actions:

To countries:

- create national technical committees for the elaboration and validation of forest regulations and to revise and harmonize existing laws and regulations;
- elaborate and/or update, in a participatory manner, national forest sector policies; and
- reinforce capacities for the control and enforcement of laws.

To COMIFAC:

- involve all stakeholders in the process of harmonizing existing forest and fiscal laws;
- reinforce the sub-regional consultation and cooperation framework for the control of illegal transboundary activities; and
- provide support to countries in establishing instruments to reinforce forest control, particularly a binding inter-state Convention.

To FAO and ITTO:

- continue supporting countries in their efforts to reinforce capacities for forest policy and law enforcement, particularly in relation to AFLEG/FLEG processes; and

- support the translation, diffusion and extension of forest laws and regulations.

To other partners, namely the Congo Basin Forest Partnership:

- support the AFLEG/FLEG Taskforce in order to provide better information and effective control of forest law compliance;
- support the translation, diffusion and extension of forest laws and regulations; and
- support the involvement of all stakeholders in the process of forest law enforcement.

Participants identified several follow-up activities, including: establishing a national technical committee for the elaboration and validation of forest regulations in each COMIFAC member country; elaborating a regional road map for the AFLEG/FLEG process; and adopting an inter-state convention for forest control.

Reported by James Gasana, ITTO Consultant

Setting the agenda for UNFF

International Expert Meeting on the Multi-year Program of Work of the United Nations Forum on Forests: Charting the Way Forward to 2015

13–16 February 2007

Bali, Indonesia

Two items are expected to dominate the agenda of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) at its upcoming Seventh Session (UNFF 7) from 16 to 27 April 2007, namely consideration of its second multi-year program of work (MYPOW) for 2007–2015 and a non-legally binding instrument (NLBI) on all types of forests. To facilitate UNFF's consideration of the MYPOW, an expert meeting was convened as a country-led initiative (CLI) in support of the UNFF, co-hosted by the governments of Indonesia and Germany and supported also by eight other developed countries as well as the World Bank and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).

Convening the Bali International Expert Meeting

Attended by some 150 participants from 66 countries, 10 international organizations, three regional groups and eleven 'major group' organizations, the meeting was co-chaired by Indonesia and Germany. Two papers were presented to guide deliberations: 'Developing a Multi-year Program of Work for the UNFF' by the UNFF Secretariat and 'Revitalizing the UNFF: Critical Issues and Way Forward' by CIFOR. A presentation on SFM financing and means of implementation was made by PROFOR (World Bank Program on Forests) followed by presentations by some major groups.

Further guidance was drawn from the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 2006/49 on the outcome of the UNFF 6. This calls for the switch from annual to biennial sessions after UNFF 7 on the basis of a focused MYPOW; a review of the effectiveness of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) in 2015; and the three additional principal functions to be performed by the IAF relating to (i) internationally agreed development goals, (ii) maintenance and improvement of forests resources and (iii) strengthened interaction with relevant regional and sub-regional forest related entities. The resolution also highlights the need to progress towards the four global objectives on forests to (i) reverse loss of forest cover, (ii) enhance forest-based benefits, (iii) increase significantly areas of protected forests, areas of sustainably managed forests and products from sustainably

managed forests and (iv) reverse decline in official development assistance for SFM and mobilize significantly increased new and additional financial resources for SFM. It calls for UNFF 7 to conclude and adopt a NLBI on all types of forests and notes the UN's proclamation of 2011 as the International Year of Forests (IYF). Lessons learned from the implementation of the UNFF's first MYPow (2001–2005), work programs of other relevant bodies as well as significant emerging issues were also taken into account.

Three working groups deliberated on the themes for the UNFF biennial sessions, the modalities of the MYPow and approaches to enhancing regional and sub-regional dimensions in the MYPow.

Themes for UNFF Biennial Sessions

In deliberating on the themes for the UNFF sessions in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015 (and thus the major elements to be included in the MYPow), WG 1 noted that while the second MYPow needed to be focused, it should, nevertheless, cover all key issues on forests so as to ensure the relevance and credibility of the UNFF. WG 1 offered the three options summarized in Table 1 for the session themes.

WG 1 also expressed a range of views on cross-cutting and other issues that needed to be integrated into the second MYPow, including means of implementation; monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR); criteria and indicators for assessment of progress; and enhanced roles for regional processes.

Modalities for the MYPow

WG 2 examined the methods and mechanisms of work of the UNFF that would result in the effective performance of its functions as well as the implementation of its mandate. These methods and mechanisms included preparations and arrangements for: UNFF sessions (pre-session, sessional and inter-session); the IYF; ministerial and high-level segments; roundtable sessions; multi-stakeholder involvement; regional and sub-regional involvement; and MAR. While lessons learned from existing procedures will be useful in further enhancing future UNFF sessions, appropriate new procedures should also be considered particularly in addressing new regional and sub-regional dimensions.

WG 2 recommended: efforts to maximize the contribution of ministers in making breakthroughs and buy-ins during negotiations; options on the frequency, timing and format for high level segments; enhancement of the effectiveness of dialogue with heads of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) member organizations and major groups; strengthening the role of CPF in supporting the UNFF; clarification of the role of the UNFF in providing guidance to the CPF; adequate time for sharing of information and experiences on progress made by UNFF members; use of Intergovernmental

Lots to talk about

Table 1: WG1 Session theme options

	OPTION A	OPTION B	OPTION C
UNFF 8 (2009)	Forests for Development (Global Objectives 1 and 4)	Delivering Sustainable Forest Management	Means of Implementation for SFM
UNFF 9 (2011)	Forests for Livelihoods (Global Objectives 2 and 4)	Forests, People and Livelihoods: Delivering Development	Forests for Development and Growth
UNFF 10 (2013)	Forests for Growth (Global Objectives 3 and 4)	Forests: Delivering Environment Stability	Sustainable Forest Management and Global Environmental Issues
UNFF 11 (2015)	Review of the Effectiveness of the IAF	Review of the Effectiveness of the IAF	Review of the Effectiveness of the IAF

Preparatory Meetings as a mechanism to facilitate inter-sessional preparatory work for the UNFF; guidelines and procedures for channeling regional and sub-regional inputs to the UNFF; coordination of UNFF inputs to ECOSOC and other UN and non-UN processes; strategic planning for the effective launching of IYF; enhancement of stakeholders' participation and involvement through better communication, networking and funding; adoption of the thematic elements of SFM and the four global forest objectives as the basis of reporting; identification and categorization of reports to reduce the burden of reporting; development of appropriate guidelines, criteria and indicators for the evaluation of the IAF; options for periodic and mid-term reviews of the effectiveness of the IAF; and capacity-building for members requiring assistance in fulfilling their responsibilities to the UNFF.

Regional and Sub-regional Dimensions

WG 3 stressed the importance of utilizing and strengthening existing forest-related arrangements and mechanisms at the regional and sub-regional levels. It examined how existing mechanisms could cooperate in providing relevant inputs to the UNFF through effective communication, interaction and coordination. It stressed that there was no need for additional mechanisms or meetings in the regions or for new and additional forest related regional meetings to be conducted but recognized the need for flexibility within and among regions and sub-regions. Some of the options identified for regional coordination include utilizing UN regional geographic groupings, FAO regional forestry commissions and UN regional economic commissions.

WG 3 called for adequate time for regional and sub-regional perspectives to be presented at the UNFF biennial sessions. In this connection, voluntary reports from regional and sub-regional mechanisms as well as national reports incorporating relevant regional and sub-regional information could be encouraged and, as required, synthesized by UNFF with the assistance of CPF member organizations.

WG 3 also considered how UNFF issues could be linked to the agenda of the meetings of regional and sub-regional mechanisms and vice-versa without disrupting or over-burdening existing work programs. It recommended that forest-related regional and sub-regional entities should address the issues to be included in the second MYPow of the UNFF particularly the implementation of the global objectives on forests, taking regional peculiarities into account and focusing on implementation (including means). It was also suggested that flexibility be built into the second MYPow to enable it to accommodate the NLBI on all types of forests once it is concluded and adopted.

Conclusion

The UNFF must approve and adopt its second MYPow at UNFF 7 regardless of whether an NLBI on all types of forests is concluded and adopted. Unfortunately, this meeting did not produce a draft second MYPow that could

be used as a basis for deliberations at UNFF 7. Nevertheless, it did generate a plethora of ideas, views and suggestions as well as a host of options and recommendations on the MYPow, all of which will be available in the meeting report to be presented at UNFF 7. The remaining task and challenge is for these valuable inputs to be integrated, crystallized and synthesized into building blocks for the formulation of the UNFF's second MYPow.

Reported by Amha bin Buang, ITTO Secretariat