



US\$13 million in new funds for tropical forests

39th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council

7–12 November 2005

Yokohama, Japan

At this session, the International Tropical Timber Council committed US\$13.3 million for new projects and activities for the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. The funds pledged at this session are in addition to the US\$7.6 million committed in June at the previous Council session, bringing the total pledged in 2005 to almost US\$21 million.

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The Council financed twelve projects and three pre-projects at this session (see page 20 for descriptions), as well as elements of the biennial work program for 2006–07, which has a total budget of US\$10.2 million. The funds needed to implement the work program include US\$3.05 million to help improve the capacity of ITTO member countries to implement CITES listings of timber species and US\$240 000 to assist countries to develop systems to demonstrate the legality of their timber exports. The work program also includes almost US\$400 000 to field-test a draft set of revised ITTO *Guidelines on the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Tropical Production Forests*.

The major donors at the session were the governments of Japan, Switzerland and the USA, while The Nature Conservancy (a non-governmental organisation) and the governments of Finland, Australia, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands and France also pledged funds. In addition, funds were mobilised from the Organization's un-earmarked resources, including the Bali Partnership Sub-account B.

More UNFF

6th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

13–24 February 2006

New York, USA

After two weeks of negotiation, 600 delegates have agreed to meet again next year to continue the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

The UNFF was created in 2000 as the evolved form of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, which itself was the successor of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. Its mandate is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, which it pursues through its annual sessions, country-led initiatives on various aspects of forests, and by supporting the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), an informal grouping of 14 international forest-related bodies (including ITTO). Together, the UNFF and the CPF constitute what is called the international arrangement on forests (IAF).

One of the tasks that the UNFF has grappled with is the possibility of a legally binding instrument on forests—a forests' convention. Several countries have been vociferous advocates of such an instrument, while others have been equally noisy in their opposition. Ultimately, delegates agreed to keep this issue on the slow-burner.

At this session, debate centred on the Chair's draft negotiating text, forwarded from the fifth session of the UNFF (held last year—see *TFU* 15/3), which was to be attached as an annex to a resolution for consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). According to the independent reporting service the *Environmental News Bulletin* (ENB), "negotiations proceeded slowly, with little sense of urgency to force compromise and complete the agreement until the very final day". In the end, delegates agreed on the text, which sets out four 'global objectives' on forests. These are:

- 1) to reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management (SFM), including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;
- 2) to enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits and the contribution of forests to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals ...;
- 3) to increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, and increase the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests; and
- 4) to reverse the decline in ODA [official development assistance] for SFM and mobilise significantly increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

Delegates also agreed on text setting out the functions of the IAF, which are:

- to enhance the contribution of forests towards achieving internationally agreed development goals;
- to encourage and assist countries, including LFCCs [low forest cover countries], to develop and implement forest conservation and rehabilitation strategies, increase the area of forests under sustainable management, and reduce forest degradation and loss of forest cover; and
- to strengthen interaction between the UNFF and relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions and instruments, organisations and processes.

The text also urges countries to make "concerted efforts to secure sustained high-level political commitment to strengthen the means of implementation to provide support, in particular for developing countries, to promote SFM".

The text proposes that after UNFF 7, to be convened next year, the UNFF will meet every two years on the basis of a multi-year program of work. Delegates agreed to conclude and adopt a non-legally binding instrument on forests at UNFF 7, on the basis of the work of an ad hoc working group that will meet beforehand. A full review of the UNFF will be conducted in 2015; it will consider, among other things, the possibility of a legally binding instrument on forests.

The full ENB summary of UNFF 6, from which the above 'agreed text' is extracted, is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/unff/unff6/>