

TOUR REPORT

In respect of

First meeting of the open ended intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group(AHEG-1) on the International Arrangement of Forest(IAF) from 24-28 February, 2014 UN Office in Nairobi Kenya.

(Dr. Rekha Pai)
IGF (IFS/EAP)

Under signed was nominated to attend the First meeting of the open ended intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group(AHEG-1) on the International Arrangement of Forest(IAF) from 24-28 February, 2014 UN Office in Nairobi Kenya.

The detailed programme for five days is placed at Annexure-I.

Background

1. UNFF 10 mandated AHEG to perform this review, in accordance with relevant resolutions of ECOSOC and the Forum, as well as the multi-year programme of the work of the Forum.
2. The AHEG mandate is to review all relevant inputs and suggestions regarding the IAF, as well as the final report by the independent assessment team, and based on this review at its second meeting, provide its recommendations to UNFF11 on the future of the IAF.
3. The key intercessional activities of the review of the International Arrangement on Forests(IAF) included three components.
 - (I) The first component is to solicit views from countries and other relevant stakeholders on the IAF. In this regard, in June 2013, countries, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, its member organizations, other relevant organizations, relevant regional and subregional forest-related mechanisms, institutions, instruments, organizations and process, major group0s and other stakeholders were invited to submit views and proposals on the IAF to the secretariat. In total, 46 responses were received which have been made available online, as individual responses, and as a compilation document. This compilation is included in the CD which has been distributed to all participants.
 - (II) The second component is to carry out an independent assessment of the IAF.
 - (III) The third component of the inter-sessional activities is the work of this expert group, tasked with reviewing the performance and effectiveness of the IAF.

The discussions and outcome of this first meeting of AHEG will inform the continuing work on the independent assessment and serve as a basis for further reflection by the expert group in preparing for its second meeting. The substantive outcome of AHEG1 is a co-chairs summary and there will be no negotiated outcome or agreed conclusion for this meeting. This will facilitate an open and in-depth discussion on all issues in the agenda of AHEG, with the involvement of all experts, the IAF team, Members of the UNFF11 Bureau and other participants.

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While welcoming experts to Kenya Professor, Ms. Judi Wangalwa Wakhungu the Cabinet Secretary provided an overview of forestry sector in Kenya and the significance of forests to the economy of Kenya.

Mr.Thomas Gass underscored the importance of the first meeting of open ended Intergovernmental AdHoc expert Group on IAF. He emphasized that the AHEG's conclusion on the effectiveness of the IAF and its recommendations on the future of the IAF, will provide a solid foundation for the eleventh session of the United Nations Forums on Forests in 2015. UNFF11 will decide on the future of the multilateral policies and institutions on forests within and outside the UN system.

The group elected two Co-chairs for the duration of the programme. The three major themes for discussion were as under

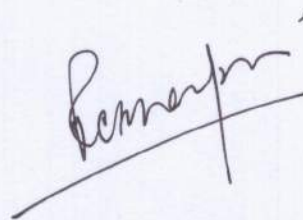
- (i) Presentation/ Panel on UNFF (its strengths, weakness, areas for improvement).
- (ii) Presentation/ Panel on Collaborative Partnership on Forest (CPF) (its strengths, weakness, areas for improvement).
- (iii) Presentation/Panel: Engagements of major groups, regional organizations and process in the current IAF: Strength weaknesses , area for improvement. Key note speeches on the way forward for the future of IAF as well as its inter connection with SDGs development agenda.

During the deliberations at appropriate time interventions were made by Under Sign on behalf of the country and copy of the 3 statements is placed at Annexure-II, III & IV.

Based on the discussion presentations and the key note speeches on Thursday night report titled Co-chairs 'summary of the discussion during first meeting of the open ended inter governmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the international arrangement of forest' was circulated on Thursday night copy of the same may kindly be perused at F/C. During the discussion on the Co-chairs report on Friday certain points which were not reflected in the report were raised. The final report has yet not been received nor is available on the UNFF website. This report is not negotiated document but a summary record of discussion which will greatly help in providing inputs at AHEG II to be held in January 2015 at New York prior to the UNFF 11 session in 2015.

In addition to above the following point are submitted on which India needs to firm up views clearly.

- Non Legally Binding Instruments (NLBI) As of now only 46 countries have submitted the voluntary report. Many of the countries including Japan, US, Brazil (in formal discussion during the AHEG 1 with the representatives of the countries) are in support of strengthening the NLBI in its existing form. The position of China is not very clear. It appeared from the discussions that China wants to strengthen the current arrangement as well as get it converted to legally binding.
- Forests and its role vis-a-vis SDGs. The following three options were put up for consideration
 - (i) A stand alone target for forests under SDGS.
 - (ii) The forests trees as a goal
 - (iii) Forest & trees as cross cutting theme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ramanathan', is written over a horizontal line.

Annex-1

Provisional organization of work of the first meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests 20/2/2014

24-28 February 2014, UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya

Time / Day	Monday 24 February	Tuesday 25 February	Wednesday 26 February	Thursday 27 February	Friday 28 February
9 am - 12pm	<p>Item 1: Opening of the Session and remarks by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair of UNFF11 Bureau Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Water and Natural Resources-Kenya Assistant Secretary General-DESA 	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>The meeting will begin at 10:00 am to enable factual comments on the Co-Chairs' summary of AHEG-1</p>
	<p>Item 2: Election of the AHEG Co-Chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remarks by AHEG Co-Chairs <p>Item 3: Adoption of the Agenda and other organizational matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of official and relevant documents for the meeting by UNFFES <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG¹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Report by the IAF Independent Assessment Team 	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p>
12 - 2 pm	<p>Lunch Break</p> <p>Plenary (CR-1)</p>	<p>Lunch break</p> <p>Plenary (CR-1: 2-3pm)</p>	<p>Lunch break</p> <p>Plenary (CR-1: 2-3pm)</p>	<p>Lunch break</p> <p>Regional Groups Meetings</p>	<p>Lunch break</p> <p>Plenary (CR-1: 2:00-4:00pm)</p>
	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compilation of views and proposals on the IAF <p>(presentation of inputs provided by countries and other stakeholders in responses to the format prepared by the UNFFS)</p>	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation/Panel on NIBI/GOFs: their strengths, weakness, options for improvement 	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation/Panel on Regional organizations and processes in the current IAF: strengths, weakness, areas for improvement 	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting of members of the IAF Independent Assessment Team with each of their respective regions 	<p>Item 4: Tasks of the AHEG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking note of the Co-Chairs' summary of AHEG-1 Other matters <p>Item 6: Adoption of the report of the AHEG-1 to the AHEG2</p> <p>Closure of the meeting at 4:00 pm</p>
2 - 5 pm	<p>Summary of the discussions in the working groups by the AHEG Co-Chairs</p> <p>Plenary (4:30-5:00pm)</p>	<p>Summary of the discussions in the working groups by the AHEG Co-Chairs</p> <p>Plenary (4:30-5:00pm)</p>	<p>Summary of the discussions in the working groups by the AHEG Co-Chairs</p> <p>Plenary (4:30-5:00pm)</p>	<p>Summary of the discussions in the working groups by the AHEG Co-Chairs</p> <p>Plenary (4:30-5:00pm)</p>	<p>Summary of the discussions in the working groups by the AHEG Co-Chairs</p> <p>Plenary (4:30-5:00pm)</p>
	<p>WG1 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-1)</p> <p>WG2 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-3)</p>	<p>WG1 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-1)</p> <p>WG2 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-3)</p>	<p>WG1 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-1)</p> <p>WG2 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-3)</p>	<p>WG1 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-1)</p> <p>WG2 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-3)</p>	<p>WG1 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-1)</p> <p>WG2 (3-4:30 pm) (CR-3)</p>

¹ All substantive discussions under agenda item 4 should take into full account the ongoing deliberations on the sustainable development goals and the post 2015 UN development agenda.

Statement by Dr Rekha Pai on 25 /2/2014 at the first meeting of the Open ended intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement of Forests

We would like to thank all the panellist for making a very comprehensive and rich presentations on the subject of NLBI

As far as GOFS are concerned, we feel that these are still relevant and there is need to extend them beyond 2015, may be up-to 2025. , instead of setting new targets . We must look for reasons as to why we have not been able to make much progress in this regard . The question has been answered in the discussion we had so far and by the distinguished panellist How can we achieve these objectives without having means of implementation .

India at domestic level is making all efforts to achieve these global objectives on forests . Recently under the National Action Plan On Climate Change, India has launched Green India Mission which aims to treat 10 m ha of degraded forest area over next 10 years . The targets include to improve 5 m ha of degraded forest area and to bring additional 5 m ha of non forest area under forest and tree cover. . India continues to have a strong and stringent policy and legal frame work to ensure SFM , and ensuring that interest of the forest dependent communities are well protected.

Regarding NLBI as we know it it an instrument to strengthen SFM. India has been following a number of conservation approaches manage forests on sustainable basis . The main legal document that provides direction for the management of forests is the National Forest Policy 1988. The basic objective of the policy is to protect and manage the forests for environmental and

ecological security of the country . The policy also states that people have first charge on these forests .One of the panellists mentioned that NLBI is not known outside forestry sector . I feel that NLBI is not well understood even within the forestry sector .When a national level workshop was held in the country more than 95% of the participant were not even aware of NLBI . However this workshop helped create awareness about this process Further regional workshops were organized, with assistance received from FAO. However this effort has been confined to a small portion of Multi stake holders and a lot more needs to be done .

Finance is the real constraint ; Despite increasing recognition of the multifunctional role of forests under various conventions such as UNFCCC,CBD,UNCCD., etc there is no clear commitment on financing . Though REDD+ does provide a new opportunity but this is not certain as of now , A number of issues including MRV ,reference level definitions etc have to be resolved .

The debate on legal vs non-legally binding instrument appears a little pre mature at this stage . There is no desired progress in the implementation of NLBI could for want of adequate means of implementation There fore we believe that strengthening of NLBI has great a future . Actions have been initiated to build the capacities of various stake holders and it will be worth while to consolidate them ‘

Thanking you Mr Co Chair



Annex-I

Statement on the inaugural day By Dr Rekha Pai India


Good morning

India takes this opportunity to congratulate the co chairs on their election and conveys best wishes for the conduct of the meetings . We also take this opportunity to thank Government of Kenya for hosting of this event and we appreciate UNFF secretariat and the Bureau for providing all the information and the support .

India has already submitted its response to the format seeking Views and the Proposal on the International Arrangement of Forests through Permanent Mission Of India at New York. We would like to reiterate that the role of UNFF in providing a useful platform among member countries and various stake holders and in furthering the objectives of SFM is deeply appreciated, given the constraints of human as well as financial resources .

Forest financing and capacity building of the various stake holders continue to be an area of concern as of now . In the context of developing countries the significance of forests in the life of forest dependent communities is becoming more and more important as we gear up to face the challenges of climate change . We feel that there is need for more visibility to the forests in the forthcoming discussion on the post 2015 developmental Agenda and the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals . Forests should get its due recognition for their significant role in the social economic and cultural development of the global community. There should be real commitment towards achieving the objectives of the SFM not only through UNFF and other processes and organizations related to forest but other related Conventions and Instrument.

Thanks



26 /2 /2014 Statement by Dr Rekha Pai, India regarding the engagement of Major Groups and Regional Organizations and processes in the current IAF

Thank you Co- chair . I take this opportunity to thank all the panellist for very useful and detailed presentations .

As already submitted,. India supports the engagement of Major Groups in the work of UNFF. Involvement of MGs bring a different perspective to the issues under consideration . Forests represent a complex ecosystem and also have a number of stake holder . Engagement of MGs bring the views of other stake holders and this makes the entire decision making process more transparent and participatory . This also supports the ownership of the decisions by a larger group of stakeholders . UNFF has provided an excellent platform for sharing views with partners of MGs in its sessions and inter-sessional activities . It is relevant to mention that MGs have tremendous stakes in the forests and will continue to play an important role in SFM .Efforts need to be made for continuous and effective engagement of these in evolving policy frame work and strengthening their role in implementing and promoting SFM. There is need to develop a number of appropriate and effective communication strategies to renew their interests and continuous engagement of such a diverse group of stakeholders

We feel MGs must take up a proactive approach to provide scientific information to various international processes and organizations including UNFF. MGs can take lead to deal with some of the issues related to cross sectoral linkages(a number of issues impacting forests are outside the domain of forest sector). Develop a convergence amongst the various Conventions (UNFCCC,CBD,UNCCD) which relate to forests but do not directly address the forestry issues

On regional organizations I support the views expressed by some of the previous speakers ,however we believe that a there is need for greater and

effective involvement of the regional groups to address the region specific problems and implementation of decisions .

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