



EU

Forest Watch

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www.fern.org

Informing NGOs, MEPs and European Commission officials. Issue 54, July and August 2001.

Bonn climate talks in disarray

WITH Japan, Australia and the US postponing – perhaps indefinitely – ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, the planned agenda for COP6-bis, starting this week in Bonn, is in disarray. EU Environment Commissioner Wallström was reported to believe the situation is now “critical”.

However, despite this diplomatic confusion, the climate crisis that prompted the Kyoto Protocol remains a significant and growing threat to forests and forest peoples. The fact that industrialised countries cannot even

endorse the baby-step targets of the Kyoto Protocol, reveals the short-sighted interests of political leaders around the world.

Fern fears that EU negotiators, who until now have held to their environmental principles despite US-led pressure, will give in on the contentious issue of carbon sinks. Fern urges the EU representatives to:

- Resist pressure to allow carbon sinks into the Clean Development Mechanism;
- Address the impacts that climate

change will have on forests, forest peoples and forest biological diversity;

- Re-focus the debate on real measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Stop the destruction of old-growth forests which play a crucial role in regulating the earth's climate and weather patterns.

For more information see Fern's new briefing note *Sinks in the Kyoto Protocol: A dirty deal for forests, forest peoples and the climate*, at Fern's website www.fern.org.

NGOs call for EU-ban on illegal timber imports

A COALITION of eight environmental NGOs presented a joint statement¹ to DG Trade calling on the EU and Commission to address the growing problem of illegal logging and the illegal trade in forest products.

Using new figures from Forest Monitor², which estimate that in the UK, Germany, Spain, France and the Netherlands, minimum amounts of between 45 and 62 percent of annually imported tropical timber is illegally sourced or traded, the statement called for the European Commission to:

- Develop new legislation to ban the import and sale of illegally sourced timber and non-timber forest

products;

- Host a multi-stakeholder meeting on illegal trade and illegal logging;
- Confirm in writing that trade restriction measures to combat the illegal trade and the trade of illegally harvested timber and non-timber forest products are consistent with WTO agreements.

DG Trade representatives responded by reporting that the Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy, is especially concerned about illegal logging and that he raises the issue when he visits regions where forest conservation is a problem, including Southeast Asia and Latin America. DG Trade will also be seeking

legal advice on how to differentiate between legally and illegally traded forest products under international trade rules.

The statement marked the first action of a growing NGO campaign to combat illegal trade in the forest sector and ensure the WTO allows for positive discrimination for legally produced and traded forest products.

Enclosed with this issue of *EU Forest Watch* is the joint statement on illegal logging and a special report revealing the shocking statistics on import levels of illegal tropical timber into the EU.

1 Available from www.fern.org

2 Attached. This research will be completed to cover all 15 of the EU member states



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Carmanah Valley, Canada.

Like many tropical forests, this temperate rainforest is the focus of a land rights

dispute and an environmental campaign. NGOs and forest peoples have joined forces to protect the valley from clear cutting.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Trade up for delegations

The Commission is reorganising its overseas delegations by opening delegations in countries of growing commercial importance, such as Malaysia and Singapore, while closing offices in smaller countries such as Belize, Equatorial Guinea and Tonga.

FSC seeks new Executive Director

Dr Maharaj Muthoo has resigned as Executive Director of the Forest Stewardship Council after only six months in post. Heiko Liedeker, head of WWF's European Forest Team, will be acting director until a replacement is found.

New staff at Fern

Berenice Muraille has joined Fern's team in the Brussels office, replacing Sofia Ryder. Berenice is a forester by training and has extensive experience in the tropics. She will be working on climate change, the UNFF and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Revamped GSP needs clear forest standards

ON 12 June the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new Generalised Scheme of Tariff Preference (GSP) aiming to encourage good forest management in developing countries.

Since 1971, the EU has granted non-reciprocal trade preferences to imports from developing countries under the GSP. The scheme includes a 'special incentives' arrangement that offers additional tariff reductions to countries managing their forests 'sustainably' – i.e. according to ITTO guidelines – although so far no countries have utilised this.

The new regulation aims to better target the countries and sectors that need the most help and to broaden the 'special incentives' criteria. Under it, countries will be able to access additional tariff

JURY STILL OUT ON UNFF

THE UNFF got off to a shaky start in its first session on 11-22 June at the UN HQ in New York.

Delegates sought to agree the new Forum's five-year work programme, a plan of action and its relationship with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) – a consortium of the main intergovernmental and multilateral agencies with activities related to forests.

Few advances were made in the first week, partly due to confusion and controversy over the role of Major Groups in UNFF sessions – with some delegates suggesting limits on NGO input according to strict ECOSOC rules.

Progress was equally slow in the final week as Northern delegates emphasised the need to address the internal country constraints to implementation of IPF Proposals for Action, while Southern governments on the other hand pushed hard for a work programme that would address external constraints linked to trade and finance.

reductions of 3.5% if they can show that they: *'effectively apply domestic legislation incorporating the substance of international acknowledged standards and guidelines concerning sustainable forest management'*. Countries will also have to provide comprehensive information of any *'forest management certification system, where such a system is used in that country'*.

The Commission said that no decision had yet been made on which definitions of 'sustainable forestry' will be considered credible, raising concerns that implementation of the GSP will be vulnerable to abuse by countries seeking to gloss over dubious forestry practices.

The proposal has been sent to the Parliament and will be implemented from January 2002 until December 2004.

Divergent views regarding UNFF work on a legal framework for forests also delayed the negotiations, which eventually over-ran by half a day. Although important questions remain unresolved, the decisions from UNFF1 do reaffirm the need to promote implementation of already agreed upon action proposals. They also allow for the submission of monitoring reports on implementation by Major Groups and contain welcome language on participation as well as the value of country-led intersessional work.

Despite this faltering first session, NGOs consider that it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the UNFF. The real test will come at UNFF2 in Costa Rica next March when substantive issues will be on the table.

In the meantime, it remains to be seen if the EU and other governments will show leadership by acting on the positive language in UNFF1 decisions. Such leadership would be demonstrated by involving Major Groups in reporting activities and through support for intersessional initiatives to address key issues including developing a UNFF system of monitoring and reporting on implementation.

Forest Agenda

16-28 July: UNFCCC Sixth Conference of the Parties, part two, (COP6-bis), Bonn.

August: Take some time off, enjoy the sunshine and remember that air flights are a major source of greenhouse gases. Go by train!

6-7 September: DG Environment workshop on the future of forest certification, Brussels.