

UNFF-2, Friday, 8th March 2002, Working Group, Agenda item 4(i): trade

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving me the opportunity to address the meeting on behalf of Fern, Friends of the Siberian Forests, Greenpeace, the Institute of Cultural Affairs, Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition (GFC/IPO) and members of the Global Forest Coalition.

I wish to make a general statement concerning the cross-cutting agenda item “trade”.

The underlying paradigm of the note by the Secretary General on Trade and Sustainable Forest Management, prepared by the ITTO, is that trade liberalisation per se is promoting sustainable forest management. This reduced economic view of trade might reflect the fact that when IPF matters on trade were considered under Programme element IV: “Trade and Environment”, UNFF process has now reduced this item to solely “Trade”.

With regard to trade as one of the means of implementation of the UNFF plan of action, UNFF has taken into account that trade needs environmental as well as social safeguards to be sustainable.

The World Trade Organization recently started new trade negotiations which are relevant for sustainable forest management: negotiations on improving market access for non-agricultural products (including forest products) as well as negotiations on the issue of trade and environment. This last issue includes market access for environmental goods and services, which is also relevant for forests as sustainable forestry might be classified under environmental goods. These issues are combined in the so-called “Doha Development Round” with the ongoing negotiations on agriculture and services, whose results will also have an impact on forests.

With a look at the ongoing WTO negotiations we strongly recommend:

- Before further liberalising the markets, UNFF should use all its possibilities that forest products come from sustainably managed sources, and that there is a comprehensive, adequate, representative and effective network of protected areas that ensure the long-term survival of forests.
- Regarding certification and labelling UNFF should urge WTO to support these schemes through trade rules.
- UNFF should remind WTO on regulations regarding sustainable forest management as they develop trade regulations so that those do not undermine sustainable trade in forest products and measures against trade of illegal harvested forest products.
- UNFF should support the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements relevant for forests such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Framework Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol which effectiveness could be undermined by trade rules.
- UNFF should follow the ongoing negotiations on agriculture and services and be aware of the planned ones on investment and transparency in government procurement. Again, UNFF should take care that new liberalisation measures are not a threat for forests.
- UNFF should ask for observer status in all WTO Councils and Committees relevant for the new trade round and ensure that more transparency in the WTO negotiations takes place.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.