
Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

Bureau Meeting

Brussels, 14 December, 2011

Report

1. Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe was held on 14 November 2011 in Brussels.
2. The meeting was opened by the Chair at 11.00 hrs after a welcome by Mr. Knut Øistad on behalf of the Kingdom of Norway, host of the meeting in the premises of the Norwegian Mission to the European Union in Brussels
3. Mr. Jan Heino (Chair), Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria), Ms. Katerina Ventřubova (Czech Republic), Mr. Knut Øistad (Norway), Mr. Piotr Paschalis-Jakubowicz (Poland), Mr. İsmail Belen (Turkey), Ms. Lyuba Polyakova (Ukraine) and Mr. Jose Maria Solano (Spain) were present.
4. The Secretariat was represented by Ms. Małgorzata Buszko-Briggs (Forest Europe Liaison Unit), Mr. Peter Csoka (FAO), Ms. Ana Belen Noriega (Forest Europe Liaison Unit Madrid), and Mr. Ilpo Tikkanen (European Forest Institute). The UNECE and the UNEP Secretariats could not attend the meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

5. The agenda was adopted without amendments.

3. Preparation for the postponed 1st Session of the INC

6. The Chair gave a report on the UNECE EXCOM meeting held on 12 December. He explained that the problem

regarding UNECE participation in servicing the INC was not included into the EXCOM agenda, but the Russian Federation had informed participants at the end of the meeting about a letter sent to the INC Chair and requested for it to be distributed to all EXCOM members.

7. Bureau members expressed their concern about not having the Russian Federation participating in the negotiation process from the beginning.
8. Bureau members expressed their appreciation to the Chair for the report and for his active participation and attempts to facilitate possible solutions. It was noted that the most recent and official Russian position regarding the INC is the one included in the statements made by the Russian participants in the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference in Oslo 14-16 June 2011, and further confirmed by the signatures of the Russian Federation of the Oslo documents.
9. The Chair reported about his participation in the EU Working Party on Forestry where he gave an update on the current INC situation as a guest of the Polish Presidency. The Chair explained that both the European Union and the countries expressed their support to start negotiations without any delays in accordance with the Oslo Mandate.
10. Bureau members underlined the importance of the participation of all countries in the negotiations.
11. The Bureau members emphasized the need to proceed according to the Oslo Mandate, and further elaborate the Roadmap.
12. The Secretariat reported about the availability of UN premises in different locations. It was decided that the INC1 would be held at UN premises in Vienna from the 27th of February to the 2nd of March 2012.
13. The Secretariat underlined that documents have to be posted before the 16th of January. A notification from the Chair regarding the new venue and date must be sent to parties.
14. The Secretariat explained that documents have to be amended regarding e.g. dates of the session and some editorial changes. Logos have to be removed from the heading of documents.
15. The Secretariat presented a draft annotated Agenda with changes.
16. Bureau members requested that all the preparatory work done by the Chair and the Bureau should be described during the Roadmap presentation.
17. The Secretariat presented a Notification on Communication on voluntary submissions by Parties on their initial views on

possible elements of the legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. However, it was decided not to send this notification due to procedural issues.

4. Secretariat arrangements

18. FAO, EFI and Liaison Unit Madrid expressed their readiness to continue servicing the INC and commented that this new scenario would imply a bigger load of work per Secretariat member and that they also regretted the absence of the other two UN organizations.
19. Norway expressed its willingness to second the FAO Secretariat with one expert who will provide support to the INC negotiation process.

5. Financial issues

20. The Chair noted that some financial needs have derived from the new situation. FAO informed about the trust fund located in FAO that could be used to cover the expenses related to the organization of the INC1 at the UN premises in Vienna (meeting rooms, translation costs), and to offer financial support to some delegations of signatory countries.

6. Date and venue of the next meeting.

21. The option of having the meeting on 13th of February, back to back with the Expert Level Meeting in Madrid, was mentioned. If needed, an audio conference will be convened on 9th of January.

10. Other matters

22. No other matters were raised.

11. Closure of the meeting

23. The Chair closed the meeting at 15:50.