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

Bureau Meeting

20-21 February 2013, Brussels, Belgium

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 20-21 February 2013 in Brussels.
2. The Chair opened the meeting at 16.00 hrs (GMT+1) and thanked Ms. Ventřubova for hosting the meeting in the facilities of the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union.
3. Mr. Jan Heino (Chair), Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria), Mr. Jacques Andrieu (France), Mr. Knut Oistad (Norway), Mr. Tamer Otracrier (Turkey), Ms. Alexandra Orekhovich (Russian Federation) Ms. Katerina Ventřubova (Czech Republic), Mr. Piotr Paschalis-Jakubowicz (Poland) participated in the meeting. Mr. Jose Maria Solano (Spain) and Ms. Lyubov Polyakova (Ukraine) could not attend.
4. The Secretariat was represented by Mr. Harald Mauser (European Forest Institute), Ms. Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs and Mr. Peter Csoka, (FAO) as well as Ms. Luisa Cabello (Liaison Unit Madrid).

2. Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda for the meeting, presented in Annex 1 was adopted.

3. Key negotiation issues on which progress was made and key negotiation challenges ahead

6. Bureau members exchanged views on the outcome of the INC3 Session in Antalya. It was noted that substantive progress was made on some sections of the draft negotiating text, including the preamble, general provisions and compliance.
7. It was noted that more progress is needed on terms and definitions, finance and institutional arrangements. It was also noted that the proposed changes in the structure of the draft negotiating text should be brought up to the attention of the Committee at an early stage in the discussion in St. Petersburg.
8. The Bureau discussed the importance of formulating recommendations on bringing the agreement under the United Nations umbrella at the resumed session in St. Petersburg and agreed that efforts should be made to facilitate discussions on this issue.

9. The Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare a non-paper, in a format of a simple table, which would summarize the existing extensive materials and information on the issues of a possibility of bringing the agreement under the UN umbrella. The Bureau agreed that such a non-paper could help facilitating Committee's discussions at the resumed session.

4. Organization of work and the documents for the resumed third session

10. The Bureau discussed the draft list of documents for the INC3 resumed session, including the addendum to the annotated provisional agenda, the revised roadmap for the negotiation process and the annexes to the draft negotiating text (Annex on arbitration and Annex on Forest Europe Signatories/States and regional economic integration organization(s)), and requested the secretariat to draft the documents.
11. In accordance with the current version of the draft negotiating text an Annex on indicators and an Annex on conciliation are to be developed by the CoP. It was therefore noted that the Bureau will not draft these annexes at that stage. This clarification will be brought to the attention of the Committee.
12. The Bureau thoroughly discussed a possible organization of work at the INC3 resumed session. The Bureau agreed that the time available for plenary sessions should be maximized. With this, the Bureau decided not to propose any working groups. It was agreed that a legal expert group established by the Committee could start working at the INC3 resumed session as early as possible, with the task of examining the Final Clauses in the Draft Negotiating Text. The Bureau also agreed that contact groups could be established during the session, should the need arise.
13. The Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare a detailed proposal of the organization of work for the resumed session, for further consideration.

5. Roadmap: from now to INC4, from INC4 to the extraordinary ministerial conference, and as appropriate, for the period after the conference

14. The Bureau reiterated that timely planning for the phase 1. from now to INC4, as well as 2. from INC4 to the extraordinary ministerial conference is needed. The Bureau also noted the importance of early scheduling of tentative dates for the extraordinary FOREST EUROPE ministerial conference. It was also noted that clarification would be needed whether the extraordinary ministerial conference could have a status of a diplomatic conference or not.

6. Views on a possible draft resolution to be prepared by the INC, transmitting the Draft Negotiating Text to the extraordinary ministerial conference to be held in Madrid

15. A part of the INC task is to "*present its results to an extraordinary FOREST EUROPE ministerial conference to be organized within six*

months after the conclusion of the negotiations” (Oslo Mandate, paragraph 29).

16. The secretariat presented some examples of procedures for developing draft resolutions, final acts or other documents which normally accompany draft agreements to be submitted for adoption to a body. It is a common practice in intergovernmental negotiations that a final act or a resolution is prepared, to which a draft text of an agreement is annexed.
17. The Bureau agreed that the INC should develop a draft resolution for consideration at the extraordinary ministerial conference. It was further decided to bring this issue to the attention of the Committee at the resumed third session and to seek the Committee’s guidance in this respect.

7. Trust Fund and financial issues

18. Mr. Peter Csoka (FAO) informed briefly on the status of expenditures in the Trust Fund, noting that currently there is a positive balance of USD 30,000.
19. The Bureau agreed that more efforts are needed to secure sufficient funds for the remaining INC process.

8. Communication issues

20. Regarding a possible IISD coverage of the INC3 resumed session the Bureau advised to request a summary report and a limited digital coverage, with daily digital photos. Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl informed about the intention by Austria to pledge 30,000 EUR to the Trust Fund specifically to support communication activities, including IISD coverage.
21. Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) briefly reported on the ongoing work by the Forest Communicators' Network (FCN) ad-hoc Team on communication advice for the INC-Forests Bureau and informed that more material should be available for discussion at coming Bureau meetings.

9. Date and venue of the next Bureau meeting

22. The Bureau decided to hold its next meeting on 18 March in Rome and also tentatively scheduled a meeting on 25 April in Brussels for follow-up work after the resumed third session.

10. Closure of the meeting

23. The Chair closed the meeting at 12.00 hrs (GMT+1) on 21 February 2013 expressing his gratitude to the participants.
