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

Bureau Meeting

24 May 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 24 May 2013 in Brussels, Belgium.
2. The Chair opened the meeting at 10.00 hrs (GMT+1) and thanked Mr. Oistad for hosting the meeting in the facilities of the Permanent Representation of Norway to the European Union.
3. Mr. Jan Heino (Chair), Mr. Jacques Andrieu (France), Mr. Knut Oistad (Norway), Mr. Tomaz Krajzer (the Czech Republic), Ms. Alexandra Orekhovich (the Russian Federation), Mr. Piotr Paschalis-Jakubowicz (Poland), Mr. Jose Maria Solano (Spain) and Mr. Tamer Otracier (Turkey) participated in the meeting. Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) and Ms. Lyubov Polyakova (Ukraine) sent their regrets.
4. The Secretariat was represented by Ms. Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs and Mr. Peter Csoka (FAO) as well as Ms. Elena Estrada Wilke and Ms. Luisa Cabello (Liaison Unit Madrid).

2. Adoption of the agenda

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

3. Organization of work at INC4

6. Ms. Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs (FAO) presented an overview of the documents for INC4 and introduced a proposal of the organization of work at the session.
7. The Bureau discussed the organization of work and suggested that the INC addresses open issues and political questions early during the week in Warsaw in order to enable necessary work processes being initiated with the aim of finalizing all outstanding issues during INC4.
8. The Bureau agreed that in addition to plenary sessions, sufficient time should be allocated to informal meetings and consultations as well as to contact groups. The Bureau recommended that the Chair convene informal meetings on important political issues, should the plenary discussion be inconclusive (including the question of the UN umbrella, or compliance).
9. The Bureau agreed that the legal expert group established by the Committee could be convened to address legal issues, e.g. the annex on conciliation or/and to review from a legal point of view other draft

provisions. This task would be undertaken in order to examine the consistency of the various sections of the text, and to advise the Committee on any legal questions that may arise from the legal review.

10. The secretariat was requested to finalize the draft organization of work.
11. The Bureau considered the responses received from the FAO-DG and the UN-OLA in regard to the INC's query on technical issues that may arise if FAO-DG or UN-SG were, respectively, invited to serve as the depositary of the agreement. The Bureau noted that the information provided by both organizations is very useful. It was also acknowledged that information on what amendments would be needed in the final clauses if the agreement would be deposited within FAO-DG or SG-UN would be extremely helpful at this stage of the negotiations.
12. The Bureau requested the Chair to contact respective legal services of FAO and the UN-OLA as soon as possible and ask them to review the final clauses of the DNT, noting that the text is not a final one.
13. The Bureau also briefly exchanged views on the recent ongoing correspondence. It was mentioned that some of the responses carry a political tone. The Bureau emphasized the need for continuing transparent procedures regarding dissemination of all available, relevant information. Simultaneously, a certain concern was expressed regarding the risks caused to the negotiations by a politicized debate which is not based on stable and proved facts.
14. Mr. Jose Maria Solano (Spain) informed that the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference will be held in Madrid on 5-6 November 2013 and will be convened by Spanish and Norwegian ministers.

4. Participation of stakeholders and civil society

15. Ms. Ms. Elena Estrada Wilke (LUM) reported on the stakeholders meeting held on 23 May in Brussels. The meeting, jointly organized by CEPF (Confederation of European Forests Owners), EESC (the European Economic and Social Committee) and FOREST EUROPE, was attended by 27 participants.
16. The current state of the negotiations was presented by Mr. Jan Heino, followed by a discussion on key issues of the LBA for the work of civil society groups as well as on possible mechanisms of stakeholders' participation of in the future LBA. She added that the report from the meeting will be available soon to the INC through a submission to the secretariat.

5. Communication issues

17. The Bureau supported the IISD reporting coverage at INC4, subject to availability of resources.
18. The Bureau decided to open media accreditation to INC4 and requested the secretariat to undertake necessary technical preparations.
19. The secretariat informed that all official documents are posted at the INC homepage and stored at FAO, in accordance to the RoP.

20. The Bureau took note of P. Csoka's report on FAO FO's contribution to the communication activities within the framework of the FCN and that the allocation of tasks has been following the Annex to the Oslo Mandate throughout the process in spite of the changes in the composition of the UN organizations servicing the negotiations.

6. Other business

Trust Fund and financial issues

21. Further to the previous discussions, P. Csoka informed about the status of expenditures in the Trust Fund (Annex to the report on current resources needs).
22. France informed about their consideration to pledge additional funding. Norway informed about their readiness to contribute to cover costs of the IISD services. The secretariat informed about receiving information on a possible additional pledge from Sweden, also in support of the IISD coverage.

7. Date and venue of the next Bureau meeting

23. It was decided that the next Bureau meeting will be held on 8 June at 16.00 hrs in Warsaw prior to the Fourth Session of the INC.

8. Closure of the meeting

24. The Chair closed the meeting at 15.00 hrs (GMT+1) on 24 May 2013 expressing his gratitude to the participants.
