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

Bureau Meeting

7 October 2013, Vienna

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 7 October 2013 in Vienna, Austria.
2. The Chair opened the meeting at 13.00 hrs and thanked the representatives of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management for hosting the meeting. Mr. Gerhard Mannsberger, Director General welcomed the Bureau on behalf of the host.
3. Mr. Jan Heino (Chair), Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria), Mr. Tomas Krejzar (Czech Republic), Mr. Jonathan Saulnier (France), Ms. Silje Trollstol (Norway), Mr. Ivan Sovetnikov (Russian Federation), Mr. Piotr Paschalis-Jakubowicz (Poland), Mr. Jose Maria Solano (Spain), Mr. Tamer Otrakcier (Turkey) and Ms. Lyubov Polyakova (Ukraine) participated in the meeting.
4. The Secretariat was represented by Mr. Marc Palahi (European Forest Institute), Ms. Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs and Mr. Peter Csoka, (FAO) as well as Ms. Edurne Lacalle and Ms. Marta Chicharro (Liaison Unit Madrid).

2. Adoption of the agenda

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

3. Preparations of the Resumed Fourth Session to be held in Geneva on 7-8 November 2013

6. Mr. Jose Maria Solano (Spain) presented a short report from the meeting held in Madrid on 19 September 2013. He reported that 27 countries and the European Commission participated in the meeting. He said that the meeting discussed various options, including a diplomatic conference of plenipotentiaries. He reported that it was stressed at the meeting that the LBA should be led by countries and not by organizations. He reported that some participants suggested a joint secretariat, but who should be in lead of it was not tackled. He further reported that Spain was requested to prepare a concept paper on a diplomatic conference. He further explained that the Madrid meeting was an independent event and its

outcome is neither instructive to the INC process nor gives any guidance to the Chair or the Bureau. He further said no organizations were represented at this meeting.

7. Mr. Ivan Sovetnikov (Russian Federation) informed the Bureau about the bilateral meeting of the Russian Federation representatives and FAO held on 27 September. Russia informed about its position regarding the hosting and secretariat arrangements and its readiness to support this proposal secretariat in Geneva under UNECE with USD 50,000 annually. He further reported that FAO considered this position reasonable.
8. Mr. Peter Csoka, (FAO) added that FAO took only note of the position of the Russian Federation, but underlined that any decision on these issues is a matter of the negotiating parties. FAO confirmed this in a letter to the Russian Federation. Mr. Sovetnikov supported Mr. Csoka's statement that any decision on the issues of LBA administration and location is a matter of the parties.
9. Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) thanked for this information noting that some Bureau members had received information in writing about this meeting; therefore there was a need for clarification.
10. The Bureau readdressed the matter of the length of the fourth resumed session, based on formal and informal requests received by the Chair from some parties.
11. While some Bureau members saw merit in organizing informal meetings and consultations on 6 November, it was stressed by several that the challenge is in parties' positions on key negotiating issues. Several Bureau members stressed the importance of a thorough preparation by Parties for a possible consensus to be reached at the resumed session, and to engage in bilateral talks prior to the resumed session.
12. The Chair proposed to encourage all negotiating parties to utilize 6 November for informal meetings and suggested his own consultations with heads of delegations in the afternoon on 6 November. The Bureau concluded that such a timetable would allow maximum time for negotiations and that informals between parties on 6 November a.m. followed by an informal consultations by the Chair on 6th November p.m. and the formal INC session on 7 and 8 November would be the best arrangement to enable parties to progress on all outstanding issues. On this basis the Chair drafted a letter to Parties with the invitation to informal meetings on 6 November, which is annexed, and requested its swift distribution.
13. The Bureau agreed on the addendum to the annotated agenda of the Fourth Session. The Document is presented at [http://foris.fao.org/static/forestnegotiations/Addendum to %20DOC1 I NC4 EN.pdf](http://foris.fao.org/static/forestnegotiations/Addendum%20to%20DOC1_I_NC4_EN.pdf). The Bureau also considered and agreed on the draft organization of work. The draft organization of work is annexed.
14. The Bureau has discussed the preparations for the resumed fourth session and among the issues travel support and the specific method that the host country suggested to provide it was also considered. The Bureau noted that party-to-party support within the framework of intergovernmental negotiations may be seen controversial and for this reason best be avoided. It was reiterated that this was one of the key arguments why the Trust Fund was created.

15. While being grateful for the generous offer of the Swiss Government for providing travel support and taking all the burden that comes with taking care of all practical arrangements, the Bureau suggested that support would be provided in accord with practice of the INC. The Bureau requested the secretariat to consult with Switzerland and further suggested that the Swiss Government kindly consider, instead of taking care of all the travel arrangements, making a financial contribution to the work of the INC and that travel support would be provided as in all previous cases.
16. Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) welcomed the Swiss offer, but stressed the importance to follow the principle of not providing party-to-party support, and said that if, for any reason, Switzerland would not be in a position to make a contribution, Austria stands ready to support the INC work and contribute to the Trust Fund for travel support for eligible countries.
17. Mr. Piotr Paschalis-Jakubowicz (Poland) suggested that Bureau's communication on a matter of financing participants from eligible countries should be clear and understandable, and above all, consistent with the principles that have been accepted. The answer in this case should be sent to both the countries making up a Trust Fund, as well as to countries bringing an in-kind contribution.
18. Ms. Marta Chicharro (Liaison Unit Madrid) proposed to take similar communication approach for the Resumed Fourth Session as at previous meeting. The Bureau was supportive to this idea and suggested to be flexible and to coordinate with the host country on the matter.

Trust Fund and financial issues

19. P. Csoka (FAO) informed about the status of expenditures in the Trust Fund. He reported that the total contributions to the Trust Fund (received or pledged) reached USD 485K so far since the inception of the INC process. He further informed that current level of the Trust Fund available resources is net USD 31K (taking into consideration also the account maintenance cost).
20. France confirmed its pledge of EUR 30,000.
21. The Bureau decided to arrange for the ENB coverage of the fourth resumed session, subject to availability of funds.

4. Other business

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5. Closure of the meeting

22. The Bureau decided to hold its next meeting on 6 November in Geneva.
23. The Chair closed the meeting at 17.00hrs on 7 October 2013 expressing his gratitude to the participants.
