

RCEN Forest Caucus Conference Call
FOCUS: Preparation for ENGO-NRCan Conference Call on UNFF6

February 7th, 2006, at 2 pm EST

Present: Andrea Lockwood (Nature Canada), Andrea Waywanko (Sierra Club – Prairie Chapter), Sarah Heiberg (RCEN), Paul Senez (Sierra Club of Canada - Victoria), Allister Marshall (Po'tlo'tek Fish & Wildlife Association), Harvey Scott (Crooked Creek Conservancy)

Chair: Andrea Lockwood

Minutes: Sarah Heiberg

1. Introduction by Sarah: Background leading up to the UNFF6

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) will hold its sixth session from 13-24 February at UN HQ in NY. This year UNFF6 will review implementation and assess needs and changes for the future of the international arrangement on forests.

According to NRCan, the UNFF6 is going to be smaller this year, given the limited success of the UNFF5. The federal government decided to scale down its involvement and, because there was no significant change between Canada's position last year and its position this year, and because of the limited funding, no ENGO delegate was sponsored to participate in the UNFF6 official Canadian delegation. Instead of focusing its energy in the UNFF, NRCan is considering placing more focus on the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Sarah requested funding for an ENGO perspective paper in preparation for the UNFF6, but NRCan's position was that the ENGO UNFF5 Report submitted by Boris Romaguer, which contained ENGO and government recommendations for the UNFF6, was sufficient. Instead of a position paper, NRCan agreed to hold a conference call for ENGOs to bring comments and concerns to NRCan for the UNFF6.

To view the ENGO UNFF5 Report go to: http://www.cen-rce.org/eng/consultations/delegate_calls/Rapport%20du%20Sierra%20Club%20du%20Canada%20sur%20le%20FNUF-5%201.pdf

2. Review the recommendations from the ENGO UNFF5 Report and pick the key recommendations to push at UNFF6

ENGO R1:

- TO FIND OUT BEFORE THE ENGO-NRCan CONF CALL TOMORROW: Does a framework exist within the CBD for a legally binding Protocol on forests?
- A legally binding Protocol on forests is a good idea because it focuses on the ecological aspect (as opposed to the FAO which is more about reforestation and

re-naturalization of land or plantation forestry). We need to emphasize the restoration of natural forests.

- We need to be involved in all three initiatives (UNFF, CBD and FAO) but we need to focus especially on enhancing and restoring natural forests.
- Important issues that are not addressed in the UNFF5 ENGO Report or Canada's Objectives for the UNFF6 Paper:
 - Forestry and climate change
 - Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge

ENGO R2:

- ENGOs support the harmonization of standards between the IAF, FSC and UNFF, especially since they consider the same groups (e.g. First Nations and local populations – this also speaks to recommendation **ENGO R4**).

ENGO R3:

- Emphasize reduced consumption as a model (reduce, reuse and recycle forest products)

ENGO R5: Not relevant

3. Review the proposed agenda for the ENGO-NRCan call and add any other items we would like to discuss

- The lack of invitation for an ENGO representative on the official delegation:
 - Implies the government feels it can speak on behalf of ENGOs
 - Is based on the false assumption that the other countries at the UNFF6 will also have the same position as in UNFF5 (ENGOs want to respond to other countries this year).
 - The fact that no ENGOs will be present and the fact that the official delegation can filter what ENGOs say and what ENGOs hear about the UNFF6 bodes poorly for the Canadian delegation and Canada's reputation
 - It send the message that ENGOs are partners of convenience for the federal government
- What is the federal government's level of commitment to the UNFF process?
- What is the intention of the federal government's strategy shift to working within the FAO? (According to Paul Senez, in "The State of the World 2002" published by the World Watch Institute, in the section entitled *The Challenge for Johannesburg* on p. 8, an example is given about the FAO dropping the minimum tree coverage necessary to qualify an area as a forest from 20 to 10 %, which nearly quadrupled the area in Australia now considered forest land.)

- In Nova Scotia there exists a precedent-setting Forestry Accord. Do any other provinces have one? There could be a National Forestry Accord. Canada needs to adopt a value-added and sustainable forestry approaches such as the one used by the Native community.
- It is important for the federal government to learn from the First Nations perspective that forests are a complex natural system and that it is much more than wood fiber and 2x4s.
- There is potential for action with the heightened awareness about climate change to encourage the redevelopment of wild forests with all their biodiversity and natural complexity
- Where is the Canadian participation in the UNFF going under the new Conservative government?

ENGO-NRCan Conference Call Draft Agenda (ENGO comments in red):

1. Context for UNFF6

- results of UNFF5 (May 2005) (Chairs text from UNFF5 attached)
- Country Led Initiative (Berlin, November 2005)
- organization of work at UNFF6

The legally binding instrument (LBI) that the Canadian delegation is working towards is a good thing but the LBI should be implemented in Canada first.

2. Canadian Approach for UNFF6 (short paper attached)

- ENGOs can question here the validity of the federal government's commitment to the UNFF process
- ENGOs are in favor of community controlled / publicly controlled forestry
- NRCan needs to clarify:
 - The "two options" in the "Canada's UNFF6 Objectives" section as well as which one the Canadian delegation is leaning towards.
 - Overall international forest policy objectives and as a nation and how the federal government plans to get the provinces such as Ontario and BC on board.
 - Whether the federal government is pushing for a legally binding instrument as a strategy to be able to walk away

3. Delegation

- ENGOs can bring up the failure to include ENGO representation on the delegation
- Who are the provincial representatives?

4. Other Issues and Questions

See section 3 above

5. Conclusions and Next Steps

4. Strategize for the ENGO-NRCan call

- Counter NRCan if they imply that Canada is a model for responsible forestry practices
- Stress that we had a meeting with six people today and not even as many people can participate in the call tomorrow (we're limited to a few voices down from several thousand among our members)
- People who will participate in the ENGO-NRCan conference call are: Andrea Lockwood, Andrea Waywanko, Sarah Heiberg, Allister Marchall (confirmed) and possibly Harvey Scott if he can get away from another conference call.
 - **People to request to participate: Martin von Mirbach, Gillian McEachern, Bob Cameron**

DECISION:

Request that the official Canadian Delegation read out an ENGO statement during the UNFF6 and incorporate it into the official UNFF6 Canadian Delegation Report. (The document will begin with a formal statement that ENGOs are disappointed that we were not included in the delegation).