

FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

28 – 30 April 2003, Vienna, Austria



VIENNA RESOLUTION 1

**STRENGTHEN SYNERGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT
IN EUROPE THROUGH CROSS-SECTORAL CO-OPERATION AND
NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES**

1. Recognising the need to strengthen coherence and synergies between policies aimed at sustainable forest management and other relevant policies, programmes and strategies through adequate approaches aimed at integration and co-ordination,
2. building on the consensus achieved by the IPF¹, we agree that, as developed in the MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe, a national forest programme (nfp) constitutes a participatory, holistic, inter-sectoral and iterative process of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national and/or sub-national level in order to proceed towards the further improvement of sustainable forest management as defined in Helsinki Resolution H1, and to contribute to sustainable development,
3. noting that nfp processes are an important means to strengthen coherence and synergies within the forest sector as well as between the forest sector and other sectors in order to facilitate work on forest relevant cross-sectoral issues through inter-sectoral co-ordination,
4. aiming to further the concept of national forest programmes in Europe to address the national needs and contribute to the implementation of forest-related global commitments and internationally agreed actions,

the Signatory States and the European Community commit themselves to

5. work towards an improved understanding of cross-sectoral issues at the pan-European level, identify key issues, actors and interaction to be considered in the regional context and enhance co-operation and dialogue to pro-actively seek solutions,
6. enhance inter-sectoral policy co-ordination by establishing or improving mechanisms
 - a) for regular communication between the forest sector and other relevant sectors to increase the exchange of information and consultation,

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Forests: Document E/CN.17/1997/12

- b) to strengthen collaboration with these sectors and to develop inter-sectoral agreement on common priorities,
- 7. develop and implement national forest programmes, applying, as far as possible, the MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe,
- 8. using nfp processes among other tools to
 - a) identify and address key cross-sectoral issues of relevance to forests and sustainable forest management,
 - b) assess gaps and inconsistencies in forest-relevant policies, programmes, strategies and legislation and take action to minimise them,
- 9. encourage the full consideration of the outcomes of nfp processes in overall national sustainable development strategies and other relevant processes and strategies,
- 10. continuously exchange country experiences gained in the nfp process, in particular the practical application of the MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe, and the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as a component of the nfp process,
- 11. make best use of information on mechanisms for implementation and financing of national forest programmes, of research, education as well as national and international programmes, such as the National Forest Programme Facility and PROFOR².

In this context the Signatory States and the European Community adopt the “MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe” (Annex).

Annex: MCPFE Approach to National Forest Programmes in Europe

² Programme on Forests (hosted at the World Bank)

ANNEX TO VIENNA RESOLUTION 1

MCPFE APPROACH TO NATIONAL FOREST PROGRAMMES IN EUROPE

Building on the consensus achieved on national forest programmes (nfps) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and its successor, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), the MCPFE shares the following MCPFE approach to national forest programmes in Europe:

“A national forest programme constitutes a participatory, holistic, inter-sectoral and iterative process of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national and/or sub-national level in order to proceed towards the further improvement of sustainable forest management as defined in Helsinki Resolution H1, and to contribute to sustainable development. It

- is based on national sovereignty and country leadership and on long-term high level political commitment,
- makes best use of existing capacities and is supportive to the development of intellectual, human and institutional capacity in the field of sustainable forest management, and is characterised by the following principles”:

Principles of nfps in Europe:

- Participation
- Holistic and inter-sectoral approach
- Iterative process with long-term commitment
- Capacity building
- Consistency with national legislation and policies
- Integration with national sustainable development strategies
- Consistency with international commitments recognising synergies between international forest related initiatives and conventions
- Institutional and policy reform
- Ecosystem approach
- Partnership for implementation
- Raising awareness

The nfp process could make use of the six pan-European criteria for sustainable forest management (SFM) as a framework which encompasses the ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of sustainable development.

Within the nfp process, policy issues are addressed at the national and/or sub-national level in accordance with the principles of the process as stated below. These issues are derived from various levels, ranging from local to global, and include the national and/or sub-national

implementation of relevant international forest related commitments. These include commitments made at the pan-European level and the global level, such as the outcomes of the UNFF, CBD, UNFCCC and CCD¹.

As a tool to periodically monitor, assess and report on the state of and changes in SFM, criteria and indicators for SFM could constitute a component of the nfp process. They can help to evaluate the output of an nfp process with regard to SFM.

Principles of nfps in Europe

The MCPFE reaffirms that all general elements and principles of national forest programmes (nfps) agreed upon by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests are generally of relevance in the European context, given the wide scope of national backgrounds in that region.

In the countries participating in the MCPFE process, the following principles of nfps should be considered as a basis which further specifies the global consensus in the European context.

(The principles are not presented in any order of importance.)

Participation²

Nfps are characterised by participation. Building on the findings of the FAO/ECE/ILO Joint Committee's Team of Specialists on Participation in Forestry (ToS) participation can be described as a "voluntary process whereby people, individually or through organised groups, can exchange information, express opinions and articulate interests, and have the potential to influence decisions or the outcome of the matter at hand". The process of participation can be characterised as a process which is inclusive with respect to interests, voluntary with respect to participation, may be a complement to legal requirements, should be fair and transparent to all participants, should be based on participants acting in good faith and sharing benefits and responsibilities, and does not guarantee – or predetermine – what the outcome will be. Sound information, inter alia derived from research, and adequate access to it is an important aspect of effective participation. Decentralisation as well as the development of human and institutional capacity constitute important aspects that are closely linked to participation.

¹ At the global level, these commitments notably include the outcomes of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process, as well as the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (Forest Principles) and chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

² Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraphs 9, 10 as well as 17 lit.(a), (e) and (f)

The type or intensity of participation varies from deliberation/consultation to more elaborate forms of collaborative decision-making. Conflict resolution schemes should be applied as appropriate in this respect. The type or intensity of participation can be different in individual phases of the nfp process (formulation, implementation, evaluation) and at different levels (national, sub-national, local).

Furthermore, different models of participation can be applied, spanning from models involving representatives of interest groups or experts to broad public participation. The selection of appropriate models of participation, inter alia, depends on the issues addressed, the nature of the interest groups and the phase of the nfp process, and can vary according to country's specific cultural, social and economic conditions.

Holistic and inter-sectoral approach³

Nfps adopt a holistic and inter-sectoral approach that considers the impact of the forest sector on other sectors and the impact of other sectors on the forest sector. Nfps are a comprehensive policy framework for activities in the forest sector. They help to guide policies, strategies and programmes in other relevant sectors at national and sub-national levels, thus creating coherence and consistency of national policies and with international commitments. Raising awareness of forest sector policies and goals to other sectors, participation and developing human and institutional capacity are important aspects closely linked to this holistic and inter-sectoral approach.

Suitable co-ordination mechanisms and instruments, established at sub-national and/or national levels, will allow links to be created both horizontally with other sectors, institutions and stakeholder groups and vertically, between the different levels.

Iterative process with long-term commitment⁴

Nfps are long-term iterative processes that are continuously adapted to reflect new knowledge and changes in the natural, economic and socio-political environment. To ensure consistency and continuity, nfps are based on long-term high level political commitment and long-term engagement of stakeholders.

Acknowledging the long-term nature of forests and forestry, suitable monitoring and evaluation procedures are developed, appropriate information collection systems established and appropriate evaluation periods determined. Different approaches and intervals could be chosen for evaluating general (strategic) goals and for evaluating specific targets, measures, activities and topics.

³ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraphs 8, 9, 10 as well as 17 lit.(a)

⁴ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraphs 10, 17 lit.(a) as well as E/CN.17/2000/14, paragraph 9 lit(e)

Furthermore, in a holistic, inter-sectoral approach, evaluation procedures for nfps also take into account periods of other sectoral strategies, programmes or plans at national, regional and international levels touching upon forests and the forest sector.

As an instrument for monitoring, assessment and reporting on the state of sustainable forest management (SFM), national and sub-national criteria and indicators for SFM could constitute a component of an nfp. The Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for SFM are a basis for the development of national indicators⁵.

Capacity building⁶

An nfp process can profit from adequate competencies and skills of the actors involved provided that appropriate participatory models and techniques are applied. Therefore, nfps aim to further develop the intellectual, human and institutional capacity and an enabling environment for sustainable forest management. The importance of building new capacities by means of training, education and research, and making best use of existing capacities is emphasised in particular with regard to Central and Eastern European Countries.

Building capacity and knowledge at all levels also supports and facilitates a holistic and inter-sectoral approach.

Consistency with national legislation and policies⁷

Nfps reflect national and/or sub-national needs and priorities and ensure consistency with national, sub-national or local legislation, policies and strategies.

Integration with national sustainable development strategies⁸

In the nfp process, SFM in all its dimensions is considered in the context of overall sustainable development. Accordingly, nfps are integrated with national sustainable development strategies.

⁵ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraph 17 lit.(d)

⁶ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraphs 14, 17 lit.(g)

⁷ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraphs 10, 17 lit.(a)

⁸ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraph 10

Consistency with international commitments recognising synergies between international forest related initiatives and conventions

Forests are addressed by various international and regional initiatives and conventions⁹. Co-ordination needs in the framework of forest-related initiatives and conventions can be identified at three levels, the national, regional and international level. Nfps aim to strengthen consistency with and synergies between relevant initiatives and conventions in each country and identify the appropriate levels and requirements for co-operative efforts and activities.

Institutional and policy reform¹⁰

Developing suitable conditions for SFM might also require institutional and forest/non-forest policy reform, including decentralisation and issues of land tenure arrangements as well as conflict resolution schemes.

Ecosystem approach¹¹

Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national forest programmes takes into consideration the ecosystem approach¹². However, the relation between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management needs to be further explored, taking into account the outcome of the conceptual analysis by the CBD Secretariat.

Partnership for implementation¹³

The implementation of forest policies in the framework of nfps can benefit from co-operation between governments, businesses and civil society. In order to improve the effectiveness of an nfp, it makes best use of partnerships and shared resources.

⁹ At the global level, these forest related initiatives and conventions notably include the outcomes of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process, as well as the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (Forest Principles) and chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

¹⁰ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraphs 9, 14, 17 lit.(a)

¹¹ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraph 17 lit.(a)

¹² Compare IPF Proposal for action 17 (a) which states that the Panel “encouraged countries (...) to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national forest programmes, taking into consideration the following: (...), ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of biological resources; (...).”

¹³ Ref. E/CN.17/1997/12, paragraph 17 lit.(i)

Raising awareness

Forests contribute significantly to the overall well-being of society in rural as well as in urban areas. Nfps are important instruments to raise the visibility of the forest sector and to enhance public awareness and understanding of the multiple benefits of forests for society. Nfps give particular importance to the role of sound information to strengthen public confidence in forest policy and forest management.

Raising awareness of forest sector policies and goals constitutes an important prerequisite to achieve mutual consistency and coherence between the forest policy and other relevant sectoral policies.