

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/27
29 August 1996
ARABIC
Original: ENGLISH

المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي



لجنة التنمية المستدامة
الفريق الحكومي الدولي المخصص للغابات
الدورة الثالثة
جنيف، ٩ - ٢٠ أيلول/سبتمبر ١٩٩٦
البند ٢ من جدول الأعمال المؤقت*

تنفيذ ما يتعلق بالغابات من قرارات مؤتمر الأمم المتحدة المعني بالبيئة والتنمية، على الصعيدين الوطني والدولي، بما في ذلك بحث الصلات القطاعية والصلات الشاملة لعدة قطاعات

مذكرة شفوية مؤرخة ٢٢ آب/أغسطس ١٩٩٦ موجهة من البعثة الدائمة لآستراليا لدى الأمم المتحدة إلى الأمين العام

تهدي البعثة الدائمة لآستراليا لدى مكتب الأمم المتحدة تحياتها إلى الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة وتتشرف بأن تشير إلى رسالة من السفير ريتشارد بتلر مؤرخة ٢٥ تموز/يوليه ١٩٩٦، طلب فيها السفير بتلر تعميم تقرير المؤتمر الدولي بشأن منح الشهادات ووضع البطاقات على المنتجات من الغابات المدارة إدارة مستدامة، المعقود في بريسان باستراليا من ٢٦ إلى ٣١ أيار/مايو ١٩٩٦، باعتباره وثيقة، على اجتماع الفريق الحكومي الدولي المخصص للغابات، المقرر عقده في جنيف من ٩ إلى ٢٠ أيلول/سبتمبر ١٩٩٦.

وقد أرفقت بهذه المذكرة الشفوية نسخة من التقرير، مطبوعة بالإسبانية والانكليزية والفرنسية. وستكون البعثة الدائمة لآستراليا ممتنة لمساعدتكم في تعميم التقرير المرفق على اجتماع جنيف المشار إليه أعلاه.

E/CN.17/IPF/1996/13

*

(A) GE.96-51582

ANNEX

CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CERTIFICATION AND LABELLING OF PRODUCTS FROM SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS

The Conference came to the following conclusions, based on its workshop discussions in which all delegates were able to participate, and recommends their appropriate consideration by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

1. Sustainable forest management is the main goal shared by all participants.
2. Certification and labelling are potentially useful tools among many others to promote sustainable forest management.
3. The efficacy of certification and labelling for promoting sustainable forest management needs to be further evaluated.
4. Approaches to sustainable forest management, including certification and labelling, will depend on local, regional and national conditions, including forest type, land tenure and ownership patterns, systems of government, involvement of stakeholders including forest owners, community, indigenous people, business, labour, NGOs, and other interested parties.
5. Both performance standards and environmental management systems are complementary and important components for the assessment of sustainable forest management.
6. There is currently insufficient information to determine the extent of the market demand for certified products.
7. There are a number of issues that merit further consideration and questions that need to be further explored with respect to certification and labelling, including:
 - costs and benefits;
 - market implications;
 - the scientific basis for defining and measuring sustainable forest management;
 - governance and credibility of certification schemes;
 - the roles of Governments and international institutions/organisations;
 - consistency with international agreements;
 - harmonisation/mutual recognition of/between schemes;
 - the trade impacts of certification and labelling; and
 - the role of environmental, economic and social objectives in achieving SFM.

Conference delegates recorded their thanks to the Australian Government for organising and hosting the Conference, and to the Australian people for their hospitality.

30 May 1996

REPORT OF THE CHAIRS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CERTIFICATION AND LABELLING OF PRODUCTS FROM SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS HELD IN BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, 26-31 MAY 1996

1. PREAMBLE

This report summarises the Chairs' views of the outcomes of the Conference, and is submitted to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) for its consideration. The report identifies issues about which there was agreement, as well as those about which there were genuinely held differences of opinion.

At the invitation of the Government of Australia, 239 representatives from 57 countries met in Brisbane, Australia, from 26 to 31 May 1996 at a Conference to consider the certification of forest management practices and the labelling of products derived from those forests. There were 143 international participants, of which intergovernmental organisations had 10 representatives, governments had 75 representatives and non-government organisations (representing among others the environmental interests, industry and forest industry workers) had 58 representatives. There were 96 domestic participants. Participants at the Conference covered the wide range of stakeholders and interest groups in the certification and labelling debate. Participants were invited in their personal capacity as experts.

The Chair of the Conference was Denis Cullity, Chair of the Australian Forest and Wood Products Research and Development Corporation and the Co-Chair was Dr Christina Amoako-Nuama, Minister for the Environment, Science and Technology, the Republic of Ghana.

The purpose of the Conference was to:

- (i) advance international dialogue on certification and labelling as a means of achieving sustainable forest management; and
- (ii) contribute to the work of the United Nations Organisation's Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) IPF Program Element IV: Trade and environment relating to forest products and service.

The Conference considered a range of issues related to certification and labelling covering the following:

- the general principles of sustainable forest management;
- the general principles of certification and labelling;
- how certification and labelling may assist the achievement of sustainable forest management;
- social dimensions of certification and labelling;
- the economic aspects and trade implications of certification and labelling; and

- how certification and labelling might be implemented to effectively assist the achievement of sustainable forest management.

In formulating the Conference's program, Australia took into consideration the IPF's mandate of "taking account of the interests of all sectors and particularities of different countries and ensuring full transparency and participation of all interested parties" in examining "the issue of voluntary certification and labelling of forest products to contribute to a better understanding of the role of voluntary certification with regard to the sustainable management of forests, including the impact of certification on developing countries".

While the Conference organisers made considerable effort to have key stakeholder involvement, it was acknowledged during the proceedings that the program did not allow for the adequate presentation of the views of the organised labour movement. In recognition of this oversight, both international and domestic representatives of organised labour were provided with the opportunity in the final plenary session to present their views on sustainable forest management and certification and labelling.

The deliberations of the Conference took place against the background of the UNCED Statement of Forest Principles and Agenda 21 chapters relevant to forests.

2. INTRODUCTION

The keynote presentation by Dr Jag Maini identified the following issues which provided a focus for the Conference:

- the need to examine differential demands for certification and labelling from various stakeholders such as consumers, governments, the private sector and environmentalists;
- the willingness of consumers to pay more for certification and labelling;
- the role of economic instruments in promoting certification and labelling;
- the impact of added costs of certification and labelling on the profitability of the forests sector;
- the impact of certification and labelling on competitiveness;
- the need for consistent concepts and terminology;
- the contribution of certification and labelling to sustainable forest management;
- the level or scale at which certification is undertaken (for instance, management unit, national);
- the adequacy of environmental impact assessments for plantations;
- consideration of the relative merits of a single global system of certification and labelling and, as an alternative, several systems encompassing reciprocal recognition; and
- consideration of phased and flexible approaches to certification and labelling.

Of the issues identified for the Conference by Dr Maini's presentation, only three were not specifically addressed. These were:

- the role of economic instruments in promoting certification and labelling;
- the adequacy of environmental impact assessments for plantations; and
- the need for an international agency to monitor the implementation of certification and labelling at the global level.

3. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

Based on its workshop discussions in which all experts were able to participate, and in response to this challenge, the Conference came to the following Resolutions and recommends their appropriate consideration by the IPF.

1. Sustainable forest management is the main goal shared by all participants.
2. Certification and labelling are potentially useful tools among many others to promote sustainable forest management.
3. The efficacy of certification and labelling for promoting sustainable forest management needs to be further evaluated.
4. Approaches to sustainable forest management, including certification and labelling, will depend on local, regional and national conditions, including forest type, land tenure and ownership patterns, systems of government, involvement of stakeholders including forest owners, community, indigenous people, business, labour, NGOs, and other interested parties.
5. Both performance standards and environmental management systems are complementary and important components for the assessment of sustainable forest management.
6. There is currently insufficient information to determine the extent of the market demand for certified products.
7. There are a number of issues that merit further consideration and questions that need to be further explored with respect to certification and labelling, including:
 - costs and benefits;
 - market implications;
 - the scientific basis for defining and measuring sustainable forest management;
 - governance and credibility of certification schemes;
 - the roles of governments and international institutions/organisations;
 - consistency with international agreements;

- harmonisation/mutual recognition of/between schemes;
- the trade impacts of certification and labelling; and
- the role of environmental, economic and social objectives in achieving sustainable forest management.

Conference experts recorded their thanks to the Australian Government for organising and hosting the Conference, and to the Australian people for their hospitality.

4. CONFERENCE FORMAT

The Conference format consisted of plenary sessions and workshops.

Role of Plenary Sessions

Keynote addresses and panel presentations focused on key issues relating to certification and labelling. These provided background information and identified issues which were subsequently discussed in workshops. Plenary sessions also provided the opportunity to report on workshop outcomes.

The Conference program was extremely tight and time management was a major concern. In the plenary sessions, experts were therefore asked to provide written questions which were passed on to the relevant speakers for answer. Some experts were critical of this format. However the workshops allowed discussion and in-depth exchange of views and the final plenary session provided experts with the opportunity to ask questions and to provide comments from the floor. This strategy addressed the concerns of experts and was instrumental in enabling the Conference Resolutions to be openly discussed and agreed by experts.

Role of Workshops

A great deal of thought went into designing the workshops as forums for open and frank discussion of issues. The Conference organisers appointed a professional workshop facilitator who assisted in carefully designing the four workshops. The themes of the four workshops were:

- What constitutes sustainable forest management?
- What can certification and labelling contribute to sustainable forest management?
- Socio-economic dimensions of certification and labelling; and
- Consideration of draft outcomes.

At each workshop, participants split into "round table" groups of 10-15 and were provided with key questions pertinent to the workshop theme for which answers were required. The workshop groups provided the opportunity for differing views and concerns to be discussed, and in most cases, a consensus view was reached. Any differences of view were recorded. Participation in the different workshop groups was by self selection. However, experts were

successfully encouraged to ensure that, to the extent possible, the composition of the various groups closely reflected the range of interests represented at the Conference. The major questions for each of the three workshops were:

Workshop 1

- What are the key forest values requiring sustainable management?
- What are the key elements of sustainable forest management systems?
- What is the appropriate scale to measure sustainable forest management?
- What information is required to measure/monitor sustainable forest management?

Workshop 2

- What are the essential principles of certification and labelling if it is to contribute to sustainable forest management?
- What should be certified (products, management etc)?
- Will certification and labelling be effective in improving forest management practices and how does it compare with other domestic and international mechanisms?
- What are the principal lessons we can learn from experience in implementing certification and labelling?

Workshop 3

- What are the potential impacts of certification and labelling on communities that are reliant on forests, and how should they be dealt with?
- What are the implications of certification and labelling for developing countries?
- What are the trade implications of certification and labelling?
- How can certification and labelling sustain long-term economic benefits?

The Conference started with key stakeholders strongly defending their positions on certification and labelling. This caused some initial tensions among some key stakeholders. However, throughout the plenary sessions and the workshop discussions, experts presented their views with integrity and in a professional manner. The workshops enabled experts to understand and appreciate positions which differed from their own. As the Conference progressed, the tensions eased culminating in the unanimously adopted Resolutions set out in Section 3 above.

5. RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS

Experts agreed that certification and labelling are two separate activities, although they could complement each other.

Certification can be defined as a process of confirming or attesting to the sustainable management of the forest.

Labelling, on the other hand, is a market tool which confirms to consumers that the products are derived from sustainably managed forests.

Sustainably managed forests can be certified and products derived from those forests can subsequently be labelled.

Any reference to the term "certification and labelling" in this report should, therefore, be interpreted as "certification that the forest is being sustainably managed" and "labelling of products derived from certified sustainably managed forests".

5.1 Principles of Sustainable Forest Management

Experts agreed that sustainable management of the world's forests was the main goal shared by all participants. While sustainable forest management was the ultimate goal, it needs to be recognised that it was an evolving concept. Some experts claimed that it was impossible to define "sustainability" as it would depend, by and large, on the environmental, social and cultural objectives that society wishes to achieve through the use of forest resources. Some experts therefore suggested that certification of "well managed forests" could be a more practical and pragmatic objective to work towards.

Sustainable forest management needs to take account of the aspirations of countries, particularly developing countries, to relieve poverty through socio-economic development. Sustainable forest management should also provide for recognition of the rights of indigenous people and workers, including appropriate occupational health and safety standards.

Workshops reported that forests possess a range of economic, social and environmental values. These values would vary with time and space, reflecting the dynamic nature of forests and differences between the forest types and community needs and aspirations. Sustainable forest management involved the active consideration of all forest values which had been articulated in relevant international initiatives on criteria and indicators for assessing the sustainable management of the major forest ecosystems - temperate, boreal and tropical.

The achievement of sustainable forest management would depend on appropriate policies, management systems and performance measures at national, sub-national and local levels. Forest management objectives should be supported by effective legislation, technology, financial and labour resources and should recognise the biological complexity and intersectoral impacts on forests. Forest management should involve: resource assessment, stakeholder involvement, goal setting, planning, field management practices, monitoring and adaptation to improve performance.

Sustainable forest management was achievable and measurable at a number of scales. Specific attributes were important at differing ecologically and socio-economically relevant scales depending on how and why they were to be measured and applied. For instance, water yield and quality would be relevant at ecosystem (regional or catchment) and harvest unit (local) levels while sustainable employment would be relevant in the relief of poverty and the provision for education, training and health services at both regional and national levels.

5.2 Principles of Certification and Labelling

Certification and labelling were seen as “potentially useful tools among many others to promote sustainable forest management” (Resolution 2).

In recognition of the importance of sustainable forest management, the Conference devoted a considerable amount of time to discussing certification as one of the “potentially useful tools” for achieving this objective. The sovereign rights of countries to control their own land-use policies was also stressed.

Experts agreed that “the efficacy of certification and labelling for promoting sustainable forest management needs to be further evaluated” (Resolution 3).

Keynote speakers suggested that a certification scheme would need to satisfy the following requirements:

- be flexible, adaptable and practical to take account of differences in forest types (including planted forests), forest ownership, large and small operations, and the capacity of nations to support sustainable forest management. These differences could result in different forest management practices;
- ensure consistency in the setting of certification standards;
- be voluntary and participatory;
- ensure credibility and transparency;
- be affordable and enhance market access;
- be capable of continuous improvement;
- incorporate performance standards into environmental management systems;
- assist forest-dependent communities to encapture the full benefits of certification, particularly by recognising the rights of workers, indigenous people and communities; and
- be consistent with national policies and intergovernmental instruments.

Some areas of disagreement emerged. Some argued that certification is not necessary, as the regulatory framework in some countries should be adequate to protect forest values.

The need for independent third party involvement in verifying sustainable or well managed forests was raised. Some experts argued that foresters and forest managers were sufficiently competent to undertake auditing of performance. However, others indicated that to ensure credibility and transparency there was a need for independent third party involvement.

There was debate about whether occupational health and safety (OH&S) issues should be included as requirements for certification. Many believed that OH&S issues are fundamental in the definition of sustainability. Some experts argued that inclusion of OH&S would depend on whether certification covers more than ecologically sustainable management of forests. Other experts also held the view that most countries have processes such as

legislation that adequately deal with OH&S issues. Certification may be used as a lever to assist OH&S objectives where OH&S legislation does not exist or by reinforcing existing legislation.

5.3 Contribution of Certification to Sustainable Forest Management

The Conference in resolving that certification of forest management and labelling of forest products are “potentially useful tools among many others to promote sustainable forest management” (Resolution 2), identified “a number of issues that merit further consideration and questions that need to be further explored with respect to certification and labelling including:

- costs and benefits;
- market implications;
- the scientific basis for defining and measuring sustainable forest management;
- governance and credibility of certification schemes;
- the roles of governments and international institutions/organisations;
- consistency with international agreements;
- harmonisation/mutual recognition of/between schemes;
- the trade impacts of certification and labelling; and
- the role of environmental, economic and social objectives in achieving sustainable forest management” (Resolution 7).

Some experts suggested that the development and application of management processes which ensure the consistent achievement of sustainable forest management performance standards, could be more important than external certification.

5.4 Current Approaches and Lessons for the Future

Speakers reported on perspectives and experiences with certification and labelling to the Conference.

These experiences revealed that the credibility of certifiers and the methods used were critical to success. None of the current approaches to certification and labelling had attained universal acceptance.

Benefits reported from experiences included improved forest management, organisation of operations and access to markets.

Some certifiers are using a combination of performance standards and environmental management systems to certify forests. This approach is consistent with Conference Resolution 5, that is “both performance standards and environmental management systems are complementary and important components for the assessment of sustainable forest management”. Certification schemes would need to incorporate both performance standards

and environmental management systems to ensure effective monitoring and on-going continuous improvement.

Dr Maini's keynote presentation raised the issue of whether there was the need for an international agency to monitor the implementation of certification and labelling at the global level.

While this issue was not specifically addressed, the potential for proliferation of certification schemes was recognised and the relative merits of a single global system of certification was considered.

Some experts expressed the view that competition among different schemes could be healthy, although proliferation of certification schemes could potentially cause confusion in the marketplace. Mutual recognition was raised as a possible mechanism to reduce confusion in the marketplace. It was suggested that mutual recognition could be signified by a common "Mark".

There was discussion on the need for local knowledge, respect for cultural differences and the sovereign rights of countries, clear communication with consumers and third party assessment in certification schemes.

5.5 Social Issues

Many of the Conference participants considered that the social impacts of certification on communities could be both positive and negative. However, some experts held the view that certification would have mainly negative impacts for developing countries. For forest-dependent communities, positive impacts could include:

- access to international markets;
- assurance of continued access to forests for traditional uses;
- improvement in the standard of living through increased financial benefits;
- stability of employment, education and training;
- participation in forest resource management decisions; and
- self-reliance, empowerment and enhancement of socio-political status.

It was recognised that many of these positive impacts could be achieved without certification, although certification could act as a catalyst and accelerate the achievement of these positive impacts.

Negative impacts of certification identified included the following:

- some communities may be tempted to over-exploit their forests for immediate financial gain because they anticipate higher production costs and reduced market access following widespread implementation of certification, particularly in countries where there was the absence of effective laws to prevent illegal forest harvesting. If

certification led to such over-exploitation, it would clearly not contribute to sustainable forest management;

- certification could result in “winners” and “losers” and cause conflict;
- there was the potential risk of communities incurring additional cost through certification without any guarantee of financial benefit through a higher premium for certified timber; and
- potential conflict with the principles of free trade.

It was suggested that over-exploitation of forests in anticipation of certification could be dealt with by:

- education and provision of accurate information; and
- legislation, regulation and codes of practice.

Experts identified that implementation of certification and labelling involves costs. Decisions on implementation should therefore involve a cost/benefit analysis, including consideration of the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits.

Organised labour, representing both domestic and international forest workers, argued that forest workers have a major interest in ensuring that global forest resources were managed sustainably. In addition to depending on forests for employment, forestry is a way of life for forest workers. The Conference heard that forests have many spiritual, cultural and other intrinsic values for forest workers, which they wished to pass on from one generation to the other.

Organised labour therefore suggested that certification and labelling schemes should ensure that local people and forest workers continued to receive long-term benefit from forestry operations that would enhance their quality of life.

The importance of the participation of local stakeholders in the setting of local standards was recognised by many. However, a concern was expressed that this had the potential to lead to the setting of different “hurdle heights” for different countries/communities. This problem should to be carefully considered so that market competition was not adversely affected.

The Conference noted that there were different pressures for certification in developed and developing countries, and in countries with high and low per capita forest cover.

5.6 Economic Issues

The main outcome from the keynote presentation and discussion of the economic aspects of certification was that there is currently insufficient information to determine the extent of the market demand for certified forest products. The extent of market demand for certified forest products should therefore be considered further. Currently there is no evidence which supports a consumer willingness to pay a price premium for labelled products.

In addition, there is insufficient information to determine whether certification can achieve its primary objectives of promoting sustainable management of forests and gaining market access. The economics of implementing certification, although still not clear today, may constitute one of the obstacles, especially to small-scale forest owners and millers.

The results of the key economic studies on market demand for certified forest products indicate that certification, and possibly labelling, could be successful in developing niche markets in countries where environmental awareness was relatively high. Little evidence was presented to support the suggestion that certification, with or without labelling, can have significant impact on the bulk of global trade in forest products.

While sustainable forest management would provide long-term economic benefits, it was felt that certification, with or without labelling and without other instruments, cannot contribute significantly to realising this benefit. However, short-term benefits might accrue to producers who can demonstrate sustainable forest management in the near future.

Some experts from developing countries were particularly concerned about possible negative impacts of certification on market access.

The possible lack of infrastructural capacity in developing countries to institute certification was identified as a major issue. The lack of human and financial resources in some developing countries to enable them to implement sustainable forest management could be a disadvantage.

The keynote presentation on the economic aspects of certification observed that the added costs of certification and labelling could raise the price of forest products, particularly wood products, and make them uncompetitive relative to high energy consuming substitutes such as steel, aluminium plastic and concrete. If this were to occur, it could reduce the profitability of the forest sector and favour demand for substitute products which might be less environmentally benign. Some experts argued that the costs reflect the currently uncoded social and environmental impacts of utilising forest resources.

In discussion, it was argued by some experts, including some from developing countries that, if demand for forest products was adversely affected, this could encourage some forest-dependent communities, particularly those in developing countries, to seek other land-use options for currently forested areas.

5.7 Trade Aspects of Certification and Labelling

Many participants were concerned that certification and labelling could be barriers to free trade. In this respect, any certification and labelling schemes would need to be consistent with the following principles of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organisation (WTO):

- non-discriminatory;
- transparent;
- not be an unnecessary obstacle to trade; and
- encourage harmonisation.

5.8 Implementation

There are possibly many different approaches to certification of sustainable forest management and the labelling of forest products. Governments could have a role to play in the development of appropriate systems. The role would vary depending on the specific country and its circumstances.

Governments' roles could include:

- **facilitating the development of appropriate and adequate standards (including codes of practice) for sustainable forest management;**
- **enforcement of national laws and regulations;**
- **ensuring consistency of schemes with national goals and priorities;**
- **ensuring relevance and appropriateness of schemes to the circumstances of the country;**
- **ensuring that any system is impartial, scientifically developed, effectively monitored, voluntary and non-discriminatory; and**
- **ensuring consistency of actions with any relevant international commitments.**

Without standardisation, different schemes which have only limited acceptance and therefore limited effectiveness could emerge. Governments and international organisations therefore have a major role to play in encouraging agreement, harmonisation and mutual recognition.

Consistency in concepts and terminology is also necessary to reduce confusion in the marketplace and should be considered as part of standardisation. It would therefore be necessary to address consistency in concepts and terminology as part of any effort to harmonise or standardise certification schemes.

Participants agreed that no single approach to certification and labelling would be appropriate for all situations. Flexibility would have to be a component of any scheme.

There were differences of opinion on the timing for the implementation of certification and labelling. In particular whether implementation should be by a phased and flexible approach. Producing countries were generally more supportive of time-staggered implementation. Whereas consumer and conservation perspectives suggested that market demands would determine the timing.

Some experts considered that "chain of custody" was not necessary for forest product labelling. Others argued that it is an essential component of credible product labelling. Some experts also argued that chain of custody for product labelling may not be cost effective and that real added value was in improving forest management.

The scale at which certification could be undertaken was also discussed. Certification of forest management could potentially be carried out at different scales or levels - forest management unit, forest owner, region, national or country. Some experts argued that certification was, by and large, about attesting to the quality of forest management or

practices, and therefore the forest management unit was the appropriate level or scale for implementation.

Others argued that certification at the forest management unit level could be too costly, particularly for small forest owners. However, opponents to certification at a larger scale, such as the national level, argued that certification at the national level may not be effective in contributing to achieving the goal of improving forest management.

Some experts preferred certification at the regional level, arguing that using the regional scale could overcome the disadvantages posed by certification at the forest management unit and the national levels.

There was a view that certification should apply to all forest types, including planted forests.

5.9 Non-wood products

The role of certification and labelling in assisting the sustainable management of forests, where non-wood products were involved, was also discussed.

Non-wood products identified as being important for trade, as well as for subsistence uses include:

- rubber;
- nuts and berries;
- medicinal plants;
- rattan;
- bamboo;
- maple syrup;
- palm heart; and
- mushrooms.

In addition, many rural communities depend on non-wood products for shelter, food and medicines. Non-wood products were important to the regional economies of many forest-dependent communities.

The Conference was informed that in some cases, the existence of non-wood products forces foresters to make compromises in terms of commercial timber harvesting in order to protect these non-wood resources.

While, in general, harvesting of non-wood products was expected to produce less severe environmental impacts to forest ecosystems than timber extraction, there had been instances where harvesting of non-wood products had resulted in local extinction of particular plant or animal species.

The sustainable management of non-wood products is determined by a number of factors including the:

- population dynamics of the species;
- frequency of its harvest;
- characteristics of the forest management system; and
- training and education of the harvesters.

Sustainable forest management involves the total forest ecosystem. Certification of forests could therefore play a useful role in promoting the sustainable management of non-wood products. Traditional knowledge and practices could be invaluable in assisting the sustainable management of non-wood products.

6. CONCLUSION

The Conference unanimously agreed that achievement of sustainable management of the world's forest resources was the "main aim shared by all participants". Certification of forest management and labelling of products derived from those forests were recognised as "potentially useful tools among many others" which can promote the achievement of this goal.

The unanimous Resolutions of the Conference are set out in Section 3 of this Report and the Conference recommended their appropriate consideration by the IPF.

For the convenience of readers of this document the Resolutions are repeated hereunder:

1. Sustainable forest management is the main goal shared by all participants.
2. Certification and labelling are potentially useful tools among many others to promote sustainable forest management.
3. The efficacy of certification and labelling for promoting sustainable forest management needs to be further evaluated.
4. Approaches to sustainable forest management, including certification and labelling, will depend on local, regional and national conditions, including forest type, land tenure and ownership patterns, systems of government, involvement of stakeholders including forest owners, community, indigenous people, business, labour, NGOs, and other interested parties.
5. Both performance standards and environmental management systems are complementary and important components for the assessment of sustainable forest management.
6. There is currently insufficient information to determine the extent of the market demand for certified products.

7. There are a number of issues that merit further consideration and questions that need to be further explored with respect to certification and labelling, including:

- costs and benefits;
- market implications;
- the scientific basis for defining and measuring sustainable forest management;
- governance and credibility of certification schemes;
- the roles of Governments and international institutions/organisations;
- consistency with international agreements;
- harmonisation/mutual recognition of/between schemes;
- the trade impacts of certification and labelling; and
- the role of environmental, economic and social objectives in achieving sustainable forest management”.

In the view of the Chairs, certification of forest management and labelling of products derived from those forest are complex issues which are unlikely to be resolved, in the life of the IPF. The CSD may wish to give consideration to establishing an intergovernmental process to further examine these issues.

**Denis Cullity
Chair**

**Dr Christina Amoako-Nuama
Co-Chair**

July 1996