

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR. OSITADINMA ANAEDU, DELEGATION OF NIGERIA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS (IFF-4)**

**New York, 1 February 2000**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first of all congratulate you and the Bureau for your election and assure you of our confidence that you will discharge the task at hand creditably.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on *International Arrangements and Mechanisms to Promote the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests*.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China recognizes that little progress has been made on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and issues addressed by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Several years of international dialogue on forests established consensus on Forest Principles, which, together with Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals, constitute a set of agreed principles and policies that guide activities on forests at national, regional and global levels.

The future international arrangements and mechanisms should take into consideration the fact that the foundation of international regime on forests had already been established, and the progress already made in the implementation of existing legally and non-legally binding instrument related to forests, as exemplified in the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. It should also take into account the relevance of forest aspects embodied in other global and regional instruments.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China associates itself with the IPF and IFF recommendations on programme elements. We are of the view that some of the elements cover a wide spectrum of issues, which include areas of priority concern to developing countries, together with countries with rich forest cover and those with low forest cover.

There is dire need to give priority to elements such as financial resources, trade, valuation, capacity-building, and technology transfer. In the case of technology transfer, we observe that little progress has been made to date. Furthermore, the G-77 and China holds the view that specific steps should be taken to help developing countries to develop appropriate technologies. The ongoing negotiations on IAM should specifically address technology transfer. These elements could create and facilitate market opportunities for a wide range of forest goods and services as well as ease market access and sustainable forest practices and management in developing countries. Proper valuation of forest goods and services will ensure sustained forest management in financial terms. In the same manner,

the need for the protection of traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK) and the sharing of the benefits that arise from their application in the industrial usage will have to be addressed by the international community. It is, however, crucial that sufficient data and knowledge of these elements be developed to enhance the necessary political decisions regarding their relevance in future international arrangements and mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

It is obvious that all the four principal functions assigned to the future IAM, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, may not engender general acceptance. The G-77 and China, however, thinks that certain flexibility can be found in the application of the functions, so that one or more of the functions can be included in a future IAM, with one of them playing a dominant primary function. Such flexibility, we believe, is vital since the principal functions are expected to give clarity and focus to the implementation of the provisions, coordination and linking of complementarities in a future IAM. A flexible approach demands that whatever form the future IAM might take, should be *comprehensive, holistic* and *inclusive* of all issues relating to forests.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China remains committed, individually and collectively, to the agreements reached since UNCED to strengthen sustainable management of all types of forests. The Group, however, regrets the fact that barely three years to Earth Summit + 10 years, very little in terms of concrete action has been registered in the implementation of various conventions and instruments related to forests at all levels. It is therefore crucial for this session to ensure that any search for international arrangements and mechanisms must not fail to redress the present anomaly.

Although the experience with lead body mechanism at developing country level has been less than satisfactory, it remains an option to be considered. In the same vein, better coordination will be achieved through the improvement of existing legally and non-legally binding instruments related to forests.

Mr. Chairman,

The immediate task for developing countries is to turn the recommendations of IPF and IFF into practical actions both at the national and local forest levels. Implementation should be given clear priority. In this regard, the negotiations on a Global Forest Fund (GFF) should be concluded.

The option for IAM should be to focus on major issues that undermine sustainable forest management, such as inadequate financial resources, unfoavourable balance of trade and lack of market access to goods from developing countries, capacity building, and technology transfer.

Mr. Chairman,

What is the way out of this problem? The G-77 and China strongly feels that there is need for sustained support for continued exchange of ideas at international forum in the area of forests. Such dialogue, the Group believes, should be conducted on a more permanent basis. It is crucial that the dialogue, which should be initiated, should be action-oriented in terms of implementation of the IPF and IFF proposals as well as the existing forest-related

global instruments, including both binding and non-binding legal instruments.

It has been obvious that the success of policy deliberation, implementation and coordination hovers on the level of political commitment at sub-national, national, regional and global levels. For policy deliberation and implementation to be effective, a significant increase in both domestic and international as well as public and private funding to build capacity and support full implementation of existing forest-related instruments will be needed. Serious consideration should be given to the provision of new and additional financial resources to complement national budgets, in addition to technological transfer, market access to developing countries to facilitate sustainable forest management.

The Group of 77 and China notes the valuable recommendations of open-ended experts discussion on special requirements for countries with low forest cover and unique types of forests (the Iran process). Such countries deserve special financial support.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, as we enter the fourth and final session of the IFF process, the G-77 and China would want to register its disappointment on the lack of progress in IFF-3 on key issues of Category II, particularly on the need for financial resources, traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK), trade and environment and transfer of technology. It is apparent that most of the bracketed text was the result of the unwillingness of our partners to commit themselves to reasonable concession on these crucial matters that could make or mar any progress towards the development of sustainable forest management. It will be practically impossible to expect countries with debilitating external debt burdens and unfavourable terms of trade, especially in forest goods and services, to make concessions that would move us forward from the present unhealthy state on the issue of *forests*.

Let us therefore resolve, Mr. Chairman, to commit ourselves to the noble objectives of promoting sustainable development, conservation and management of all types of forests, by displaying enough political will and commitment to move the process forward in a holistic manner.

I thank you.