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# GLOBAL PUBLIC POLICY NETWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT

## *The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and its Successor the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) Processes*

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By

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### SUMMARY

Increasing globalization processes have often been characterized only by quantitative changes, such as increasing capital flows, foreign direct investment, technological changes and the revolution of the communication system. In recent debates, scientists of various disciplines have focused on qualitative aspects of globalization processes and a changing organizational logic of actions. This requires new mechanisms and creative institutional arrangements to adequately address problems of global concern, such as the protection of the ozone layer, forest degradation and deforestation, the fight against Malaria and corruption and the overall issue of poverty reduction. Not only the concept of *global public policy networks* shows that the nation-state as sovereign actor in international affairs has become an institution of the past. This does not indicate that the state as such, or governmental actors, will disappear. Nation-states, governmental actors and intergovernmental bodies (including the United Nations system, the World Bank, IMF and others) are a constitutive part of a new system of multi-level governance. However, the influence of large parts of the business community and civil society (mainly NGOs) has increased enormously in the last decade. Designing institutional arrangements in different sectors to tackle transnational and global problems is part of future tasks in the globalization debate.

Focusing on the *global public policy network approach*, a case study on the international forest regime illustrates new challenges and limits of global governance mechanisms as well as difficulties and problems of tri-sectoral cooperation. Since deforestation and forest degradation is occurring more rapidly, it is not only important, but also necessary for Northern and Southern countries to build consensus on sustainable forest management and effective implementation strategies. After the Earth summit in Rio in 1992, the *Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)* and its successor the *Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)* have increased cooperation with non-governmental organizations and parts of the private sector. However, eight years after the Rio conference, Agenda 21 and the forest principles, the mandate of the IFF ended. The negotiations will continue in the *United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)*, because further arrangements are needed to achieve consensus on specific questions. Forest management is one example for the need of effective tri-sectoral cooperation, because the integration of all relevant stakeholders is the only way to sustainably solve the problem.

Due to the multi-level system of governance and the interconnectedness between the global, regional, national and local levels, it is necessary to bridge operational and participatory gaps. Since globalization processes include elements of localization, as the slogan "*think globally – act locally*" indicates, effective implementation strategies at a national and local level are crucial. Participation and the inclusion of all relevant actors is time consuming and needs monitoring and facilitating processes. Intergovernmental bodies and their secretariats are playing a particularly important role in this context. However, they must become more open and flexible in providing a forum for other actors to participate more actively. An emerging global civil society and a global citizenship are facing the heterogeneous challenges.

## I. GLOBAL PUBLIC POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT

Based on the conceptual framework of *global public policy networks*<sup>1</sup>, this analysis focuses on the global problem of forest degradation and deforestation. Today, it is on the top of the agenda of various institutions and organizations, state and non-state alike as slogans “acting to protect the forests” indicate (Eigen 2000). Since there are many ongoing initiatives worldwide to stop deforestation, I will focus on an institutional arrangement, which has its roots in Rio in 1992, the *Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)* and its successor the *Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)*. In contrast to the predominately operational *Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP)*, the process of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests represents an 'ad hoc, inter-sessional and open-ended' mechanism with a clear focal point on strategic pilot scale projects. It also aims at discussing new institutional approaches at a global level. The latest session of the IFF took place in early February 2000. After two weeks of negotiations the IFF agreed on a “text without brackets”. Consensus could be achieved in some points. However, further negotiations are needed to facilitate and promote implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for actions as well as further action, which may be agreed upon. The IFF states that the main objective of further processes on forest management is the promotion of the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests in a long-term commitment. The purpose of such an international arrangement would be to promote the implementation of internationally agreed actions on forests at the local and national level, to provide a coherent, transparent and participatory global framework for policy implementation, coordination and development. To achieve the objective and to carry out the function of the IPF/IFF process, the IFF suggested the ECOSOC and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) would establish an intergovernmental body, the *United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)* (see Report of the last IFF Session).

This paper sets out new dimensions of strategic policy and philosophy of inter-organizational forestry action. The social construction of an inter-organizational philosophy of forestry action in the course of the IPF/IFF process represents endogenous control processes of the actors involved. (Obser 1999). Focusing on cooperation processes between the different actors involved, the following questions are particularly relevant: How does the IPF/IFF integrate non-state actors in the process? How can the roles of the different actors

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Public Policy (GPP) Project, funded by the United Nations Foundation, was launched in Washington, D.C. last summer. Among others, this paper was initially prepared as case study on international forest management for the GPP project. For further information please see the GPP webpage at <http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net>.

involved be characterized? What kind of problems occurred during the IPF/IFF process between the different groups of actors (at a horizontal level) and between different levels of interaction (at a vertical level)? What kind of lessons learned can be drawn from the experiences and for further negotiations during the following UNFF process? How can inter-agency cooperation between UN agencies and others be improved? To answer these questions and to reflect the complexity of the IPF/IFF process, it is paramount to take into account the road to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio and the actual Rio process itself. The initiation phase of a network is crucial, because it lays the foundation for success, as well as outlining problems and difficulties that were dealt with during the process. I will point out why certain actors should be included in addressing forest management. Next, I will outline the Rio process and the discussions on a global legally binding and non-binding agreement as road to the establishment of the IPF/IFF. The Earth Summit, Agenda 21 and the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) are crucial to understanding the problem area and the way the IPF/IFF operates. Then, I will focus on the IPF/IFF process itself outlining the interaction of different groups of actors as well as the organizational structure. Participation of a wide range of actors is neither a panacea for problem solutions nor for effective implementation at the local level. However, an exchange of knowledge, resources and capacity establishes synergies and constitutes a positive-sum-game for all actors. Finally, I will analyze future challenges and possible roles for the UN and its specialized agencies in solving the problem of deforestation and forest degradation.

## **II. INITIATING A GLOBAL DIALOGUE ON FOREST MANAGEMENT**

The most important precondition in solving problems at any level of interaction, from the global to the local level, is a common understanding, or at least the awareness of a problem area. Determination to solve the problem in cooperation with other (all) relevant actors is also paramount. Within the international forestry community, there is a broad understanding of the implications of deforestation as well as forest degradation and the need for sustainable forest management. However, between the different groups of actors relevant to the concept of *global public policy networks*, there is neither a universally agreed definition of the problem nor a common interpretation of sustainability and intergenerational equity. Therefore, developing consensual knowledge on how to address the global challenge of deforestation and forest degradation is one of the key most effective factors.

Since the late 1980s, various initiatives at the local, national and international level were implemented, but none could solve the problems of deforestation on their own. Since it is getting increasingly difficult for both governments and single actors, private and civil society alike, to solve problems of deforestation, various organizations and initiatives try to involve different actors in establishing effective cooperation to combat deforestation.<sup>2</sup> The complexity of deforestation partly explains the emergence of different groups and actors in the forest sector.<sup>3</sup> The private sector, as well as NGOs and indigenous groups, provides vast resources, knowledge and experiences. Moreover, NGOs are most often described as being closely connected to the local level.

## **II.1. International Forest Management and the Increasing Complexity of Deforestation**

Forests play a critical role for human kind as a prime source of food, shelter, medicine, fuelwood, fodder, lumber, soil and even as a basis for tourism. Furthermore, forests are important for stabilizing landscapes, influencing water flows, water quality and the composition of the atmosphere. They are also major reservoirs of biodiversity in all latitudes and home to various groups of indigenous people. In the last few decades, approximately half of the forests formerly covering the planet have disappeared; deforestation is expanding and accelerating. Since 1950, the demand for wood has doubled, with paper use increasing more than five times. Deforestation is occurring most rapidly in South America, primarily in the Amazon, in South East Asia, and in Southern and Central Africa. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that an average of 15.4 million hectares of all types of forests was lost annually during the 1980s –an area the size of Peru and Ecuador combined.

### **II.1.1. Causes of Deforestation**

To understand the issue, it is essential to distinguish between deforestation and forest degradation. Whereas deforestation is understood as conversion of forests for other land

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<sup>2</sup> See e.g. activities of the World Bank at <http://www.worldbank.org>; The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) at <http://www.fscus.org/fscus1a.html>; World Wildlife Fund (WWF) at [www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org), and others.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. the idea to establish a World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development (WCFS) originated prior to Rio 1992. But no consensus could be achieved on the establishment of a commission either within or outside the UN system. North-South divisions and the debate on a global legally binding agreement impeded progress during the debate. Finally, the WCFS held its first meeting in June 1995 after the establishment of the IPF as a Forum within the UN system. At its first meeting the WCFS emphasized that its work will complement and contribute to the IPF. Both processes, however, failed to establish effective synergies. After a

uses, forest degradation refers to changes in forest quality and occurs *"when the species diversity and the biomass are significantly reduced through, for instance, unsustainable forms of forest utilization"* (Humphreys 1996, p. 2). Based on Humphreys analysis of forest politics, the main causes of deforestation vary from boreal to tropical forests. Particularly detrimental to tropical forests are national development politics and internationally sponsored development criticized for environmental destruction including deforestation especially by NGOs.<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s some studies analyzed a correlation between deforestation and external debt. The World Commission on Environment concluded that the need for foreign exchange encouraged *"many developing countries to cut timber faster than forests can be regenerated"* (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, p. 68). To this point, Richards and Moura Costa argue that forest exploitation and degradation occur, because they are profitable. Market and policy failures including weak regulation are seen as major causes (Richards et.al. 1999, p. 1). This stresses both the importance and necessity of integrating the private sector in forest management strategies.

The gold, beef, oil and timber industries lead to the growth of export-led industries, which in return causes deforestation. The cultivation of drugs and the increasing drug trade also leads to forest degradation as do military operations; e.g. during the Vietnam war and in 1994 during the civil war in Rwanda which caused a refugee exodus to Tanzania and Zaire. Development politics in forest regions, agricultural policies on the borderline of forests, energy and land settlement policies may interact with each other causing global dynamics as a cause for deforestation. Finally, population growth and poverty in developing countries can be considered to cause environmental problems including deforestation (Humphreys 1996).

### **II.1.2. Effects of Deforestation**

Effects of deforestation are not limited to the local level. In fact, one of the most important ramifications of deforestation is its potential effect on the degradation of the atmosphere. A broader scientific understanding has emerged in the last few decades with regard to the role of greenhouse gases, including the relationship between CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere,

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series of regional public hearings including actors from the NGO community, the WCFSD published its final report "Our Forests our Future" in 1999 (World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Reacting to various critiques, the World Bank launched a Forest Policy Implementation Review Strategy (FPIRS) in 1994 (World Bank 1994) starting regional consultation processes in different continents that included a variety of actors. The aim was the evaluation of their recent forest politics and an increased understanding of sustainable forest management. (World Bank 1991 and 1994).

deforestation and global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its first report in 1990 and noted the relationship between increased CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emission into the atmosphere. Tropical forests serve as arsenals for biodiversity, and consequently deforestation destroys plants as well as flora and fauna. Therefore, environmental NGOs, such as the WRI, IUCN, WWF, and others, play an active role in promoting a global strategy to ensure a rich biodiversity. Deforestation has different local and regional effects, because of the forest's function as source of timber and supply of fuelwood for local communities. Tropical forests contain a wide range of non-wood products such as rattan, bamboo, honey and fruits. The wide ranges of goods that forests provide makes deforestation an especially acute political issue. However, a variety of goods and different effects of deforestation affect different actors at different levels of interaction and makes cooperation particularly challenging.

## **II.2. Forest Management and the Need for Tri-sectoral Co-operation**

The complexity of the problem has three main reasons. *Firstly*, as outlined above, there are many different causes for deforestation. *Secondly*, an extended range of political actors needs to be integrated at both vertical (international, transnational, national and local) as well as horizontal levels (including governmental, civil society and private actors). *Thirdly*, forests are closely linked to other parts of our environment, such as climate change, biodiversity and soil erosion. Considering the effects, there is a clear need to involve various actors to create an inclusive process facilitating effectiveness and legitimacy as well as incorporating joint knowledge. Governments and intergovernmental processes in the last decades, however, often failed to solve specific problems on their own.

The tri-sectoral model promotes the idea that during a long-term process all actors can gain from cooperation. In the forest sector, NGOs provide increased research and knowledge as well as experiences and connections to the local level and indigenous groups. They are motivated and very active. Without NGO movements and their contributions to Rio and government lobbying, specific topics would not have reached the agenda. Shown by the IPF/IFF processes, the integration of the private sector is more difficult. But the creation of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) in Geneva indicates an increased understanding of inter-generational equity and the need to implement sustainable forest management within the private sector. As Björn Stigson of the World Business Council

for Sustainable Development states “to sustain the world’s forests as a productive resource will therefore require new partnerships and cooperation between all stakeholders, governments, business and civil society” (Stigson 1999). As outlined above, the multi-level dimension and the complexity of the problem shows that it is impossible for only one actor to solve the problem sustainably. Forest management has traditionally been widely discussed in the broader context of agriculture. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was the first international organization with a forest department and played the leading role in forest management until the late 1970s. Its regional reports published in 1980-81 made the topic more visible to the international community.

Until the 1980s, the FAO as well as the World Resources Institute (WRI) set up separate initiatives in order to combat degradation of tropical forests. After various meetings and negotiations the two complementary initiatives formally merged in 1987. A new document entitled *Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP)* was created based on previously FAO and WRI publications. The WRI strengthened the importance of NGO participation, the local level and the integration of indigenous groups. Under FAO, the TFAP’s international lead agency, the process developed into a broadly based coalition between UN agencies, governments, international and local NGOs. The business community, however, did not play a crucial role during this process. At the international and national levels, the *informal Forestry Advisors Group* launched in 1985, became an integral part to the *Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP)* as a forum for donor-coordination. In 1990, FAO and UNDP redesigned the TFAP. Further, the *International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)*, responsible for the implementation of the *International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)* played a role during the IPF/IFF process as well as in the *Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)*. The ITTA was originally signed in 1983 to promote the trade in tropical timber and the improved management of tropical forests. The UN agencies, the World Bank, WWF among others are active players at the international level; in addition, governments set up national forestry programs (NFP). However, none of these initiatives could solve the problems of deforestation on their own. Some initiatives tried to involve various actors and establish effective cooperation in an effort to reduce deforestation (e.g. The World Bank and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), as non-governmental network including the private sector).

### **II.3. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and the Process of the Establishment of the IPF/ IFF**

During the preparation for the Earth Summit in Rio, forests and issues of forest management were a "top issue" and various actors were involved in formal and informal negotiations during the sessions of the Preparation Committees. However, informal meetings of UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank and FAO members failed to establish a consultative group on forests with the purpose to achieve consensus on strategies of international forest management. According to participants, high levels of tension characterized the negotiations. Realizing that other actors were getting more actively involved in the process, the FAO played a critical role during the negotiation process. The discussion concerning forest management at the UNCED was characterized by North-South confrontation: The idea of a Global Forest Convention (GFC) emerged and was most controversially discussed during the Rio process. Bramble and Porter credit the emergence of the idea of a GFC to NGO lobbying during the G 7 summit in Houston in 1990 (Bramble et.al. 1992). The discussion failed because the developing countries (G77) opposed any initiation of negotiations towards a legally binding agreement proposed by the developed countries (G7).

As a result of Rio, the CSD was established under the aegis of the UN to implement Agenda 21.<sup>5</sup> At the third session of the CSD in 1995, forest management was added on its agenda. After Rio, forests had not been debated at such a high-level UN organ. The task of this session was to deal with follow-ups of the Forest Principles and Agenda 21, particularly chapter 11, at the national level. Consensus could be achieved between all members of the CSD to establish the IPF. Its overall purpose was to achieve global consensual knowledge on international forest management. According to the principles of Agenda 21, different actors, namely IOs, UN specialized agencies and programs and parts of the NGO community contribute to the process with their experiences and knowledge from other networks and initiatives. All agreements in Rio were inputs to further IPF/IFF sessions. The CSD and the forest principles built the basis for further negotiations. Agenda 21 states that "*national governments need to work with business, non-governmental organizations, scientists,*

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<sup>5</sup> The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was established as a functional Commission of the Economic and Social Council (see decision 1993/207 at [gopher://gopher/un.org/00/esc/cn17/enable/1993-207](http://gopher://gopher.un.org/00/esc/cn17/enable/1993-207), September 13, 1999). The intergovernmental body is composed of 53 member states elected for terms of office of three years. Other states, UN organizations, accredited inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations can attend sessions as observers. (<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csdback.htm>, September 13, 1999.) One of the role of the Commission is described as promoting a dialogue and build partnerships for sustainable development with governments, the international community and all relevant groups including

*technologists, local community groups, indigenous people, local governments and the public to create long-term forest conservation and management policies for every forest region and watershed” (Agenda 21, Chapter 11).*

The creation of the IPF would not have been possible without a new spirit of trust and cooperation that emerged after the Rio process prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the CSD among developed and developing countries through various formal and informal meetings. During the negotiations, it became clear that the various post-Rio initiatives lacked a unifying focus. The decision to call the new institution a "Panel" reflected the hopes of some governments that the IPF will play the same consensus-building role as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) did for global warming.<sup>6</sup>

#### **II.4. Purpose and organizational structure of the IPF/IFF**

During its two-year mandate and four sessions, the IPF contributed to the internationalization and vitalization of the discussion on forest management. Although stakeholders from

**Box 1:**

**The IPF/IFF mandate was to achieve the following goals:**

1. Improve national forest policies (NFP) and development strategies at the national level;
2. Better coordination and enhanced quality of international cooperation;
3. New approaches to forest resources assessment including social and economic values of forest resources;
4. An improved understanding of environmental implications of harvesting and trade of forest products.

Northern and Southern countries are together in one forum, perceptions are still different and further consideration, analysis and research is required. However, the process shows that developing consensual knowledge through inter-sectoral learning processes and capacity building is both a critical and time-consuming task.

The IPF was designed to integrate the outputs of a large number of ongoing processes and initiatives. As stressed in several documents of the CSD, the Panel will particularly draw upon the technical expertise, resources and knowledge of relevant organizations as well as from all “major groups”. According to the CSD, this includes a variety of actors within and

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women, youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific community and farmers.

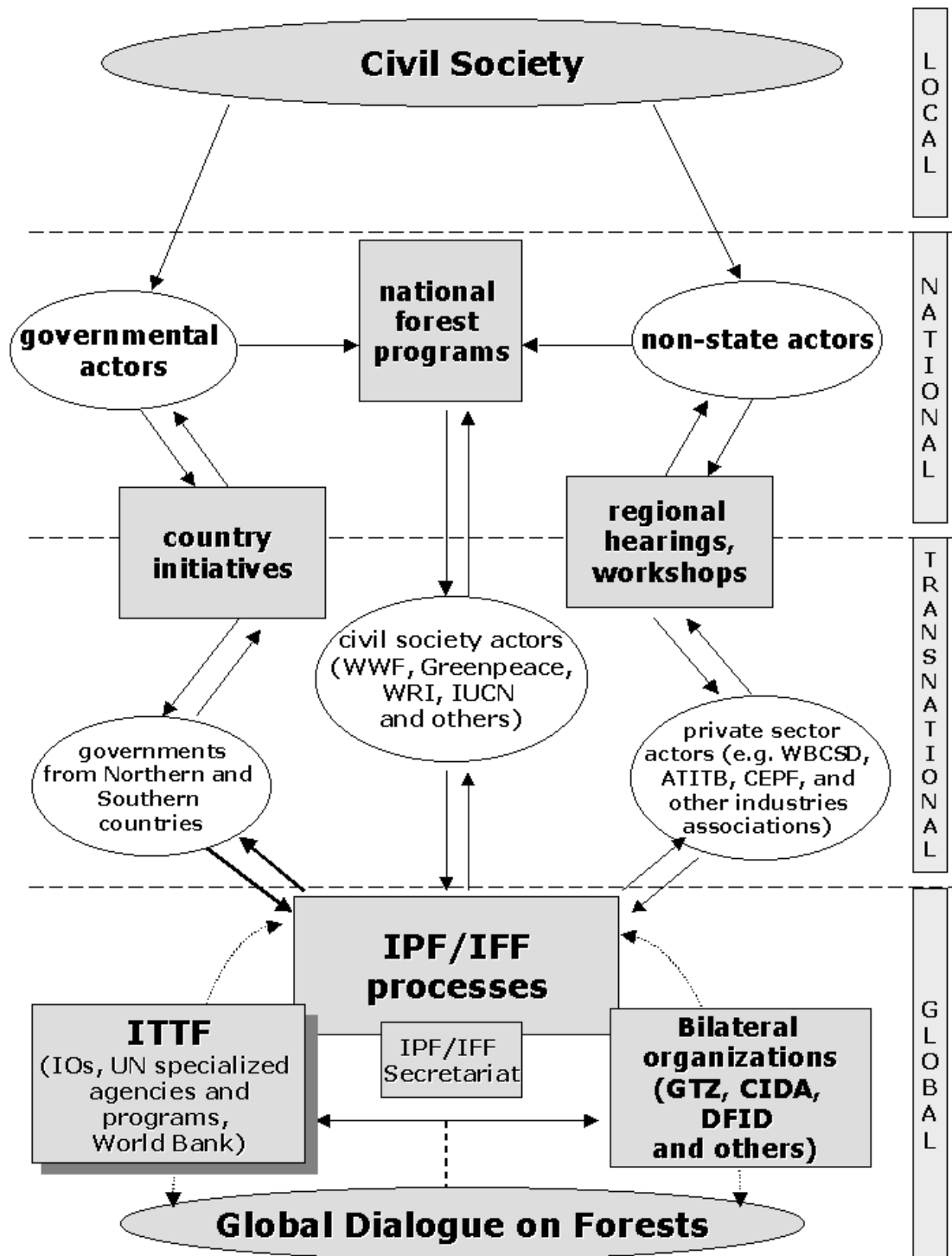
<sup>6</sup> The IPCC made enormous contribution to the establishment of consensual knowledge on linkages between deforestation and climate change. Its report was presented to the Second World Climate Conference in Geneva in 1990. The conference was mainly attended by government delegations and scientists. However, NGOs could increase their influence and supported the negotiation process as observers. The IPF/ IFF process as well as the IPCC process shows that intergovernmental processes have to become more open to other actors and flexible to achieve sufficient outcomes.

outside the UN system, such as the UN and its specialized agencies, the World Bank and other international organizations and NGOs as well as forest-related initiatives and processes set up by those organizations. Its purpose is described as making substantive progress towards international consensus and coordinating proposals for action of all types of forests within the next two years.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forestmandate.htm>, *September 12, 1999*.

Figure 1: The Global Dialogue on Forests (based on IPF/IFF Negotiations)



At its first session, the Panel elected two co-chairs and three vice chairs to lead the work. In addition, a small secretariat was established within the Division of Sustainable Development to support the Panel; it was funded by voluntary extra-budgetary contributions either in cash or in kind. Furthermore, expert meetings sponsored by one or more countries, IOs, and major groups, were organized to contribute to the Panels work in the identified areas. In order to ensure coherent support from the UN system, the informal Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) was established by FAO, UNDP, UNEP, ITTO, World Bank, CSD, and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Its major task is to coordinate activities, exchange knowledge and contribute to the Panel's work. The Panel itself met four times in the period from 1995-1997 and contributed to CSD 5.

**Box 2: IPF Program of Work:**

1. Implementation of UNCED decisions related to forests at the national and international level, including an examination of sectoral and cross-sectoral linkages;
2. International Cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer;
3. Scientific research, forest assessment and development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;
4. Trade and environment relating to forest products and services;
5. International organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments including appropriate legal mechanisms.

The IPF was comprised of all the member states of the CSD, and was also open to any other interested UN member governments, UN specialized agencies, programs such as UNDP, UNEP, FAO, and to participants of accredited NGOs and other parties under CSD rules.<sup>8</sup> A large variety of actors participated and contributed to the IPF/IFF process during the expert consultations (Six-Country-Initiative 1998). The business community, however, was hardly visible at the international level. Additionally to its program of work, the IPF created a set of eleven more detailed program elements as a basis for the Panel's deliberations.<sup>9</sup> After two years of negotiations in February 1997, the IPF work resulted in more than 100 negotiated proposals

<sup>8</sup> NGOs and representative organizations of other major groups that are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) can participate in the IPF/IFF meetings. If an organization does not have Consultative Status with ECOSOC they may be eligible to attend the IFF meetings by being nominated on their letterhead as representative by a NGO which does have consultative status. Furthermore, the secretariat does not issue invitation letters to NGOs. Especially within the NGO community the accreditation process of NGOs has been widely discussed in recent years. The process requires the filling of an application followed by a review and approval by the ECOSOC. Especially for small NGOs and those having little or no substantive international activity or financial support, this process is still the cause for exclusion of some organizations.

<sup>9</sup> The program elements include: progress through national forests and land use plans; underlying causes of deforestation; traditional forest related knowledge; afforestation; reforestation and the restoration of fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and pollution, countries with low forest cover; efficiency and coordination; financial resources; assessment; scientific knowledge; criteria and indicators; trade; environment; cost internalization; certification and labeling; institutions instruments as well as legal mechanisms.

for action on a number of issues related to sustainable forest management (SFM) from the program elements mentioned above.

After IPF 4 and the fifth session of the CSD there was still disagreement on how to continue the global dialogue on forests. The Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) finally established an ad hoc open-ended *Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)* under the aegis of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) in June 1997, with a two-year mandate. *"In order to increase the effectiveness of international support to National Forest Policies (NFPs), a new 'Forum for International Consultation on Forests' based on the experience of IPF was proposed ... Such a forum would promote international support for the NFP process. Being a consultative body, whose work is supported by technical and scientific advice, it should establish collaborative leadership but not coordination of national processes in the forest sector. It should ensure that all actors, including NGOs and the private sector, are integrated into the consultation process."* (Six-Country-Initiative 1998). The IFF should also work towards consensus on legally binding international arrangements and mechanisms on all types of forests. That is still an important and controversially discussed part of the cooperation process.<sup>10</sup>

Until 1999, the IPF/IFF process had achieved neither a holistic nor a comprehensive approach to sustainable forestry management. For the international policy dialogue after the last IFF session in February 2000 and beyond, it is important to take into account that links between the level of global policy decision making, negotiating and visible actions to be taken on the ground (local level) must be established. After IFF 3, the international *Forestry Advisory Group* initiated a global dialogue to exchange knowledge and achieve consensus in preparation for the last IFF session in the inter-sessional period until February 2000. A process including governments, NGOs and the business community from Northern and Southern countries is the key element to further progress in developing consensual

**Box 3:**  
**IFF Program of Work:**

1. Promoting and facilitating the implementation of proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest.
2. Considering matters left pending and other issues arising from the program elements of the IPF process.
3. Creating International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

<sup>10</sup> See for example: Mankin, William (1998), Box 4.4., pp. 29-31.

knowledge and approaches to limit the destruction of forests.

The IPF/IFF Secretariat is one example of informal inter-agency cooperation within the UN system. The staff of the Secretariat is seconded from the UN agencies ITTO, FAO, UNDP, CSD and UNEP. Furthermore, Germany and Finland provide financial resources for staff members. Only the Coordinator and Head of the Secretariat are appointed directly. Coordination of work and initiation of cooperation between the members of the different organizations have been two of the major challenges for the Secretariat itself. It played a major role during the IPF/IFF process. The cooperation between the different organizations within the Secretariat contributed enormously to inter-agency coordination within the forestry sector and the development of consensual knowledge would be more difficult without its work. Bringing together members from different organizations as well as from Northern and Southern countries is an important step forward. The Secretariat made efforts to integrate NGOs and the private sector, which is still seen as a major task. The Secretariat built a forum, and is responsible for making the process as visible and transparent as possible to other relevant and interested actors. All documents are available through the IFF homepage on the Internet or via mail. Since 1998 a newsletter is published by the Secretariat and available to all interested groups and actors. The Secretariat has even initiated a trust fund to strengthen participation from Southern countries and by NGOs.

The informal *Interagency Task Force on Forests (ITFF)* was set up to combine resources and create effective knowledge management. After informal meetings and negotiations, the other members agreed that the FAO should chair the ITFF, because the FAO had been pushing to be the lead agency. The organizations agreed to take the leads for the different program elements as part of the work program. The division of power is one important aspect of the IPF/IFF process. According to Tage Michaelsen, the last years of negotiations and especially the ITFF process and the country initiatives have been a very “*dynamic process*”.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, expert meetings sponsored by one or more countries, IOs, and major groups were organized to contribute to the Panels’ work in the identified areas and could be characterized as “sub-networks”. The expert meetings have been an important basis for the IPF/IFF process and contributed to the visibility of the problem. The consultations were often organized as joint initiatives (e.g. government-NGO initiative in Costa Rica) between different groups of actors, integrating Northern and Southern participation.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview September 2 and 3 1999, New York.

However, Southern participation is still one of the major problems within the IPF/IFF process. Despite attempts to integrate actors from the South, the problem and perception of deforestation is reflected differently in Southern and Northern countries. For Southern countries, the new millennium will still be dominated by poverty, a lack of resources and education. However, the degradation of tropical forests can not be solved without integrating actors from those countries. The Six-Country Initiative entitled "Putting the IPF Proposals for Action into Practice" is one example of North-South integration (Six-Country-Initiative 1998).

### **III. THE ROLES OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS AND THE TRI-SECTORAL ASPECT**

An increasing diversity of actors at the international, national, and local levels have a stake in forest destruction, while others focus on forest conservation. According to Agenda 21, the IPF/IFF was set up to accommodate actors from all three sectors. The IFF is both committed and convinced that NGOs and the private sector should play a major role in the negotiation process. Participation of the private sector is necessary to solve the issues at hand, increase legitimacy of the process, increase effectiveness and prospects for compliance, and to honor the "power shift" in favor of non-state actors. Since Rio, the situation has changed dramatically and the negotiation processes on the international level are more open and fertile for NGOs, including indigenous groups and the business community, to participate. Although NGOs and the private sector are welcome to participate in the IPF/IFF processes, their mandate is still limited and their comparative numbers are still low. Especially for small NGOs or actors limited to the local or national level, it is difficult to participate in the global forestry dialogue. Expert consultations are one important mechanism to increase participation and contribution of NGOs and the private sector to the IPF/IFF process. Therefore, it is important to facilitate a network-building process at both a regional and local level. Involving all relevant stakeholders is paramount for further negotiations and network building processes at the international level. However, this does not imply that all stakeholders have to be actively taking part in the IPF/ IFF negotiations. Rather, it is important to integrate all actors in a governance framework. Institutionalizing knowledge exchange and the creation of new knowledge as basis for consensus building should be an integral part of the framework.

### III.1. The Role of NGOs

During the IPF/IFF process, NGOs were playing an increasingly important role in the cooperation processes. However, they were still integrated as observers rather than full participants. NGOs were often responsible for pushing specific topics to the agenda. Without the participation, research and campaigns organized and pushed by national and international NGOs, it would have been more difficult to receive attention from donor agencies and national governments. However, the analysis of the policy process and the international political environment shows that governmental actors remain the focal point for political decisions and informal coordination. Traditionally, NGOs have been viewed as revolutionary actors, especially in the environmental arena. A history of disagreement and mistrust of governmental actors in negotiation processes was an attribute NGOs are confronted with. The “traditional” approach of NGOs was not to work together with governments. Whereas in the past most NGOs adopted this approach, more recently, an increasing number of NGOs have chosen to cooperate with governments and to take part in intergovernmental processes (Mezger et.al. 1998).

International NGOs from Northern countries particularly supported biodiversity issues during the global dialogue on forests. The majority of governments on the other hand, focused on issues of sustainable development, trade and economic issues. NGOs have been participating as observers in the negotiations, but the lack of results lowered both their interest and their commitment. Although involved from the beginning during the Rio process, certain NGOs, such as the *World Resource Institute (WRI)*, chose not to get overly involved in the process, because they were, and are still pessimistic about the possible outcomes of the network. The involvement of NGOs often depends on their governments and the constellation of personalities. If governments support the work of NGOs in their country, they have a chance to get more deeply involved. The majority of government representatives is still critical about the role of NGOs, since they represent a country’s population and perceive themselves as legitimate actors in the national and international system. NGOs are often described as civil society representatives with “*moral high values*” (Holloway 1998, p. 248) in contrast to governmental actors and the business community. Considering an increasing number and different categories of NGOs, Holloway points out that diversity within the NGO community increases not only along North-South lines.

Generally, NGOs and the private sector are welcome to participate in the IPF/IFF processes, but they do not have the same infrastructure as governments. The structure and

organization of international negotiations are very important for progress and further development.<sup>12</sup> Since Rio, the situation has changed for the better, as the process has become more open and beneficial for NGOs and other actors to participate. According to NGO representative Bill Mankin "*[t]he opportunity for NGOs to participate [during the negotiations of Agenda 21] was basically limited to their representatives sitting silently in the back of the chambers observing some of the debate and to distributing position papers and conserving with delegates in the hallways. Whenever the debate got particularly heated or shifted to actual negotiation, the rooms were closed for NGOs and other observers*" (Mankin 1998, p. 28).

During the IPF/IFF process NGOs are participating more actively with oral interventions, policy papers and direct lobbying of government delegations. Especially during the expert consultations, actors other than governments, could make important contributions to the global forestry dialogue. The integration of NGOs and the private sector varied dramatically among the different meetings and "*NGOs often had to push very hard to get into the door*" (Mankin 1998, p. 32). Especially questions of causes of deforestation, illegal timber trade and aspects of 'Traditional Forest Related Knowledge' (TFRK) were pushed on the agenda by NGOs. Furthermore, NGOs participated actively in the debate, whether or not to pursue a global forest convention. This issue is still very controversially discussed and remains one of the main topics on the agenda of the proposed United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF).

### **III.2. The Role of the Business Community**

Although there is a broad understanding that it is important to get the private sector involved to adequately address forest management, the business community is hardly visible in the IPF/IFF process. At the international level the *World Business Council for Sustainable Development* (WBCSD) was engaged from the start. However, private actors are more active at the national level (at least in developed countries) and are sometimes an integral part of government delegations (see e.g. USA, Canada, Finland). This is due to the structural characteristics of the IPF/IFF process to meet twice yearly for two weeks. Participation from the private sector is severely hindered due to time constraints. The initiation process including the road from Rio to the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, is a

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<sup>12</sup> During the IFF 3 negotiations, for example, it was nearly impossible to reserve meeting rooms in advance, and

second factor and explanation for lacking business participation. According to business participants, the CSD-process as precursor of the IPF/ IFF process has been critical for the failure of an effective integration of the private sector, because it was time consuming and little progress could be achieved. The learning process and knowledge exchange is very slow. If the private sector is to get involved in international negotiations more actively, governments and IOs must become more open and flexible. Learning processes and the establishment of consensual knowledge as positive sum-game for all actors is only possible, if all actors are willing to cooperate and to change perceptions. Synergy effects can facilitate trans-sectoral compromises in a long-term perspective. The three groups of actors have different backgrounds, languages and experiences in problem and conflict management. Therefore it is important to find consensus on terms as well as on problem areas. During the IPF/IFF process, governments and IOs are the lead agencies and NGOs and the private sector still have to adopt their language to make successful interventions. It is important to create more positive examples and synergies between the different actors including different levels of interaction. The process and the development show that the institutional environment and the nature of cooperation changed. Smith argues that the *“instability of business policy communities derives from the unwillingness of business to encourage state intervention, the large number of actors involved, the conflicts of interests between actors, the political nature of many of the areas where business is involved and the organization of the state”* (Smith 1993, p. 160).

In the business community, a general agreement of the problem and facts is crucial. There are very few cases where business participation could be strengthened over the last years. The Forest Stewardship Council is one example for NGO and business cooperation in negotiating forest certification issues. Taking into account those processes, the mechanisms that encourage a more active participation of the private sector at the international level can be established in the post IPF/IFF process.

### **III.3. The Role of Governmental Actors, IOs, UN Programs and Specialized Agencies**

Governmental actors are the main actors in the IPF/IFF process, occupying key decision making positions. There is a structural gap in the effective contribution of Northern and Southern countries. Although both sides participated actively, Southern countries often lack

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they had to leave if government representatives asked for their meeting rooms.

both financial and human resources to make an effective contribution. Both the Secretariat and the developed countries have tried to remedy the problem (see establishment of a trust fund etc.), but the limited amount of resources has not allowed for an alleviation of this disequilibrium.

A general danger making participation more difficult for Southern countries is the governance structure characterized by top-down (rather than bottom-up) process of international negotiations. An inclusive process makes it easier for Southern actors and actors from the local level to make effective contributions. Expert consultations are good examples for a better involvement of southern and local actors. However, some governments from the South are unaware of the broader context of those expert consultations simply, because they do not have any information on the processes.

The UN as initiator of the IPF/IFF process as well as other multilateral UN institutions and IOs, such as the World Bank, failed to establish coherent strategies in addressing forest management during the negotiation process. IOs are an important element in international negotiations, providing a discussion forum, resources and knowledge, which are mandatory for the cooperation process. UNDP, UNEP, FAO and ITTO seconded members to the IPF/IFF Secretariat and provided further resources. They played a major role in initiating the ITFF in support of the IPF/IFF process. Although providing background papers in preparation for negotiations, the World Bank has been hardly visible in the IPF/IFF process and in the ITFF. This is partly due to its focus on its own projects.

The FAO was subject of considerable criticism for its role in the ill-fated Tropical Forestry Action Program (TFAP). This criticism went to the heart of FAOs administration, resulting in a loss of political and financial support for the TFAP. At the global level, the FAOs credibility was further challenged by its open support during Rio for a new convention on forests, against the will of some developing countries. At the time of the IPF establishment, it was considered significant that the CSD did not choose to have the IPF administered by the FAO. Especially NGOs preferred shifting the global debate away from the Committee on Forestry (COFO), one of FAOs official bodies, which was perceived to be dominated by industry interests (Tarasofsky 1999).

#### **IV. OUTCOME AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

The IPF/IFF process shows new challenges as well as limits to new models of global governance. The IPF/IFF process is one example to illustrate difficulties of participation and inclusion, which are both central to the global public policy concept. The analysis illustrates that time plays a crucial role in trust building processes, which are necessary to include all relevant stakeholders. As the IPF/IFF case indicates the integration of the private sector is often limited to the national level, but it is important to increase its participation at the international as well. The IPF/IFF process lacks effective policy implementation at both regional and local levels. Following policy cycles, action needs to be taken on the ground and policy reformulation is needed to solve the problems effectively. The IPF/IFF process has shown that the results and recommendations of international negotiations do not reach the level of consensus to improve the global situation and stop the degradation of our forests. One of the major future tasks is still to form the "common ground" within the global forest community, including all sets of actors as basis for an effective coordination of instruments and cooperation at the international level. Effective coordination and cooperation among all actors at the international level comprises implementation of actions at the regional, national, and local levels. Lessons learned and experiences of those actions can form a background for further negotiations in the *United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)*.

Among the different actors, there is still a lack of knowledge and resources. Especially for small NGOs, or actors limited to the local or national level, it is difficult to participate in the global forestry dialogue. This is particularly relevant to groups from Southern countries. The global dialogue on forests still lacks a comprehensive approach to sustainable forest management. National programs of actions deriving from the international as well as national levels have often been implemented without being positioned in the context of sustainable development. For the international policy dialogue, it is important that a link between the level of global policy decision making, and negotiating and visible actions to be taken on the ground will be established.

NGOs as well as the business community increased their role in the cooperation processes. However, they are still integrated as observers rather than full participants. Apart from the UN mechanisms for the involvement of non-governmental actors, the IPF/IFF process can be considered to be transparent. All background documents of the IPF/IFF process as well as reports of the eight last sessions are easily accessible. (However, reducing the gap in accessing information for Southern NGOs and indigenous groups will be on the top

of the agenda during the next few years.) Nevertheless, the IPF/IFF process failed for a number of reasons and the negotiations will continue. *Firstly*, the increasing complexity of the problem, an increasing number of actors and levels of interaction, caused many poorly coordinated activities in the international arena. *Secondly*, a lack of both a common understanding of the problem and effective leadership is still obvious, partly due to diverse interests of the three sets of actors. *Thirdly*, while important contributions could be made and forests were discussed on the top of the agenda during the Rio process, negotiations were characterized by North-South confrontation. During the IPF/IFF process some progress could be achieved. *Fourthly*, during the IPF/IFF process NGOs played a crucial role and were signed responsible for pushing specific topics on the agenda. However, the integration of private enterprises and the private sector in general has been limited.

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