

1997/65. Establishment of an ad hoc open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 1995/226 of 1 June 1995, approving the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental panel on forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development to pursue consensus and formulate coordinated proposals for action towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests,

Recognizing that the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests is a crucial factor in economic and social development, environmental protection and the Earth's life-support system,

Taking into account the decision taken by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session to continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests through the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development to work in an open, transparent and participatory manner, with a focused and time-limited mandate, charged with, *inter alia*, (a) promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests; (b) reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests; and (c) considering matters left pending as regards the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel, in particular trade and environment in relation to forest products and services, transfer of technology and the need for financial resources,²⁴⁴

Taking into account also the decision of the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session that the Forum should identify the possible elements of and work towards consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally binding instrument, and should report on its work to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999; based on that report, and depending on the decision of the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum should engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests; the Forum should convene as soon as possible to elaborate further its terms of reference and decide on organizational matters; and the Forum should be serviced by a small secretariat within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, supported by voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations,²⁴⁵

1. *Decides* to establish, under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development, an ad hoc, open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests as envisaged above, which will report to the Commission at its eighth session in 2000;

2. *Also decides* that the Forum should hold its first (organizational) session in New York from 1 to 3 October 1997 so that the preparations for its substantive sessions can start without delay;

3. *Further decides* that, at its first session, the Forum shall schedule its programme of work, decide on the modalities of its work, including the election and designation of officers, and recommend to the Council the number, venue and duration of its substantive sessions, which could be of up to two weeks each, and, recognizing the wide range of issues to be addressed, decides that the Forum may consider dividing its work between in-session working groups, on the understanding that no more than two working groups would meet simultaneously;

4. *Decides* that the Forum should be serviced by a small secretariat within the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development, supported by voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations, that the operation of the Forum

will require funding to support activities as well as meetings and participation by representatives of developing countries and major groups from developing countries, that the participation of major groups should be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission and that, in this regard, the following sources of funding should be considered: voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations to support the work of the Forum, secondments from international organizations and in-kind contributions from countries and international organizations, including the hosting of meetings;

5. *Encourages* interested Governments and organizations to make early voluntary contributions to ensure that the work of the Forum starts quickly;

6. *Recommends* that support from the United Nations system should, as far as possible, be derived from the reallocation of resources within the existing budgets of United Nations bodies in order to respond to high-priority activities.

42nd plenary meeting
25 July 1997

²⁴⁴ Ibid., para. 40 (a)-(c).

²⁴⁵ Ibid., paras. 40 and 41.