

Country-led initiative (CLI) in support of UNFF

INTERLAKEN+10 - Governing forest landscapes

Lessons learnt from ten years of experience and the way forward post-2015

3rd to 6th February 2015 in Interlaken, Switzerland

UNFF Youth Speech

Concluding plenary of the CLI Interlaken+10, Friday 6th February 2015

Introduction (Anna Stemberger)

Good afternoon distinguished guests,

In the past few months since becoming joint focal point for the Major Group Children and Youth, I have reflected on the challenges of increasing engagement of youth in the forum in a more meaningful and representative way.

I can say with certainty that the experience of Interlaken+10 Country Lead Initiative has improved the process. While not perfect, it has greatly increased the number of voices engaged in the UNFF dialogue--we are 25 youth from 16 different countries representing diverse backgrounds. This meeting has increased Youth's capacity to engage in UNFF processes by clarifying our vision and values, and to put forth concrete policy recommendations on how to improve the future International Arrangement on Forests.

The delegates representing youth at this meeting have gone through a rigorous application process to be here. This has been followed up with preparation through research on the UNFF policy formulation in the following

5 main themes:

Forest Governance,
Forests and climate change,
Forest management and technology,
Multiple use of forests,
Forest education.

On Tuesday, many of us met in person for the very first time, by the end of the day on Wednesday we had defined policy problems, identified values to inform of criteria for evaluating policy alternatives, and choose the top policy solutions. On Thursday morning we presented to expert panel for feedback.

Thank you for the mentoring and time of our student panellists.

Additionally, this workshop would not be possible without the generous contributions of the German and Swiss governments.

I would like to especially thank Angela Deppeler and the Swiss Students of the Bern University of Applied Science, and Claudia Greco from Helvetas.

The outcome of this workshop is a youth statement with concrete policy recommendations to address issues that we see as important within the current framework of the IAF. This policy brief will be included in the CLI report and distributed ahead of UNFF11.

It is with great honour, that I present May Anne Then who will share our values and vision and Jacob Amoako to present the policy recommendations of our workshop

May Anne Then is the President of the International Forestry Students' Association and student at the University of British Columbia in the Faculty of Forestry. Jacob Amoako is a Masters in the International Forestry Master's Program at the Bern University of Applied Science.

Part A: Vision and Values (May Anne Then)

As **youth of today**, we believe in:

- Respect
- Resilience
- Transparency
- Equitable partnerships
- Unity in Diversity

These values translate into a world we envision for the future.

As the **youth of today**,

- We envision a world where youth are **valued** and can **actively** participate in decision-making & **equitable** partnerships;
- We envision **innovative** education systems which can **adapt** to the changing needs and expectations of our **local** and **global** communities;
- We envision **respect** for forest ecosystems, individuals and their diverse perspectives on forests;
- We envision **holistic** governance of our forests, where societies are aware of earth's **finite** resources;
- We envision **resilient** forests as a part of a **multifunctional landscape**, where people have equitable access and rights
- We envision **knowledge**, in all its forms, **valued** and **shared** between and among different nations

We realise that the world we **currently** live in is **not** the world we **envision**.

(ACTION)

So today, as the focal points of the **Major Group of Children & Youth, the International Forestry Students' Association** commits to the following **four** actions:

Firstly, to strengthen our partnerships with other youth organizations to increase youth representation within the Major Group

Secondly, to raise the **importance** of UNFF processes among our peers through the International Day of Forests

Thirdly, to lobby our country representatives to allow **active youth participation** in country delegations - to ensure uptake of our proposals

Fourthly, to compile our collective youth statement and policy proposals to be included in the Country-Led Initiative final report to be distributed ahead of the UNFF 11

These are the actions that we commit to in realizing our visions. And now, we would like to ask you to consider the problems we have identified based on our **core values** and specific solutions we have designed.

Part B: Problems and Solutions (Jacob Amoako)

As youth, we identified EIGHT (8) pertinent problems:

- Firstly, we see a lack of implementation of previously agreed policies AND a focus on problems of the past
- Secondly, We also see an inadequate long-term strategic approach to halt the impacts of climate change on sustainable forest management
- Also, there is a lack of political commitment to innovative approaches to utilize the potential of forests for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- We also see an emphasis on profit-logic perspectives of consumption is problematic
- We see a lack of transparency and accountability of the global supply chains
- We see a limited availability of reliable data and the limited utilization of new technologies
- There is also a lack of societal awareness of the multiple values of forests and the multifaceted nature of forestry

- Lastly, we see a failure of our education systems to adapt to emerging issues and approaches

Policy recommendations

In light of these problems, we propose the following actionable solutions that we believe if considered and implemented by UNFF would optimize the benefits accrued from forests and enhance sustainable and equitable use of forests.

On the problem of forest governance

- Firstly, we propose the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should establish new rules that enable participation of all major Groups in all stages of discussion
 - Member States should establish a permanent working group (One from each Major Group) tasked with staying on current emerging challenges to the forest sector (e.g. deforestation driven by land use change – zero deforestation commitments), and putting them on the UNFF’s agenda

For addressing climate change, we propose

- The forest instrument be revised to include a clause to prioritize climate change mitigation and adaptation, and strengthen the capacity of countries to address these issues through sustainable forest management

For Multiple use of forests, we propose

- International action plans addressing both transparency standards for Multi-National Corporations and governments and public learning about the ecological and social costs, taking into account our planetary boundaries

For Management of forest and use of technology, we propose

- The establishment of internet based learning platform and global data network, in support to the existing SFM toolbox (FAO), to share knowledge and promote capacity-building

For forest education, we propose to

- Establish a ‘Forest Impact Lab’, tasked with strengthening collaborative research and development of forest and forestry related education. The overarching aim of this ‘global centre of excellence’ is to identify gaps in, and develop innovative tools and technologies to inform and shape, forestry curricula, communications and capacity building.

Two unique projects for the Forest Impact Learning have already been identified:

- 1) Developing a forestry education and communications toolbox
- 2) Forest Impact Week, consisting of regional workshops and a global symposium, co-chaired by youth

Hosted by a re-established global forest education network under the UNFF secretariat, the Forest Impact Lab would consist of a core group of representatives from the CPF, regional education networks, and the MGCY; it would then function as a participatory and dynamic platform to connect researchers, practitioners and students/youth as well as existing and emerging regional educational networks

Conclusion (May Anne Then)

We began this workshop asking ourselves whether we think this week, what we are doing, will matter, and I think after going through this process, we **strongly** believe that **we DO**.

Yesterday, among the snow-laden trees resembling crystallized giants and amongst the rolling, shimmering hills of white,

I pondered this idea of '**will**'.

Despite discussions about the challenges behind possible alternative governance structures, what emerged was that if the **will** is strong, everything else will follow.

Compared to the 197 members in the UNFF, our group of 25 may **seem** small. But despite our limited numbers, and balancing studies and work, our **collective will** as **youth of today** has brought us here to speak to you.

I am emphasizing that we are the '**youth of today**' because youth are a part of the world we all live in right now. We are breathing the same air, speaking about the same forests; we are among you.

We are often told that we are the **future**, but the world we envision is a world where children, youth and adults, are all considered equal citizens of this earth. The 'youth of the future' are in fact, the '**youth of today**'.

As **Youth of Today**, we do not simply present policy recommendations for you to consider. We have **committed** our wills to **actions** and **strongly believe** that the will of the UNFF and ours can be aligned to produce **meaningful action**.

Thank you.