

IV.Proposal of Canada

Possible elements of an international convention on forests

An international convention on forests should build on the many recommendations produced by the international dialogue of the past 15 years and, at a minimum, should:

(a) Establish the overarching objectives, fundamental principles and definitions that would provide a common understanding of sustainable forest management;

(b) Specify the obligations that parties would undertake to implement sustainable forest management, for example:

- Maintain a national forest estate as a percentage of total area
- Complete, review and update forest inventories
- Develop national frameworks of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management
- Develop and implement national forest programmes
- Integrate traditional forest-related knowledge in forest management
- Safeguard forests, as appropriate, from fire, insects, diseases, pollution and alien species
- Apply management plans
- Complete networks of protected areas
- Strengthen transparent forest concession allocation systems
- Require environmental impact assessments for projects with likely adverse effects
- Ensure the participation of stakeholders in forest policy decisions
- Encourage industry to develop and use voluntary codes going beyond national legislation
- Support the development of certification schemes that reflect “essential” principles
- Promote research, capacity-building, education and public awareness

(c) Promote cooperation among parties and between parties and international organizations (for example, through agreements);

(d) Consider enhanced access to public and private financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their obligations (likely a new forest fund);

(e) Establish a compliance regime and dispute settlement process;

(f) Create a permanent governance body with the power to monitor, periodically review and recommend approaches to strengthen the effectiveness of the convention and advance its implementation

through the establishment of subsidiary bodies and actions such as programmes of work;

(g) Establish a secretariat to provide coordination;

(h) Create a structure to enable periodic monitoring and reporting on global and regional progress in achieving sustainable forest management as well as peer reviews;

(i) Define its relationship to other international legally binding forest-related agreements.