

- 1) a consensus emerged among delegations in favour of using UNCED as the primary forum, until June 1992, for "conclusive decisions pertaining to forests";²
- 2) a decision was made to develop "non-legally binding principles on forests" that could be a stepping stone to an ICF.³

As a result, no agreement was reached in Rio to negotiate a legally binding forest convention, only a "non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests".⁴ In addition, there was an agreement on a chapter of Agenda 21, Chapter 11, "Combatting deforestation".⁵

Despite the fact that an ICF was out of reach, the consensus achieved in these documents is an important step toward raising the profile of forests as an issue for continuing action. For instance, preambular paragraph (d) of the "Guiding Principles" refers to the need to keep the principles "under assessment for their adequacy with regard to further international cooperation on forest issues". In a similar fashion, paragraph 11.13 (e) of Agenda 21, highlights both the need "to facilitate and support the effective implementation" of the non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles, and the feasibility of "all kinds of appropriate internationally-agreed arrangements" to promote international cooperation on forest management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

IV CONSIDERATIONS

1. Problems facing the world's forests

² This was meant as a clear signal to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), in particular, not to preempt the UNCED process by pushing competing instruments on forests.

³ That decision was reaffirmed in July 1991, at the London Economic Summit, where the world's seven largest industrial democracies endorsed the idea. See appendix II, an excerpt from the London Summit Declaration.

⁴ See appendix III, a copy of these "Guiding Principles".

⁵ See appendix IV, a critical appreciation of this chapter. This appreciation was written in January 1993, by Dr. Ron D. Ayling, Program Officer, Forestry Sector, IDRC. However, it does not necessarily reflect the official position of IDRC.