

***REPORT***

**Edmonton,  
Canada**

**19-21  
September  
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**North  
American  
Forest  
Commission**

**Twenty-ninth Session**



**Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations**



**REPORT**

**of the**

**TWENTY-NINTH SESSION**

**of the**

**NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION**

**Edmonton  
Canada  
19 – 21 September 2017**



## PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	24-29 July 1961
Second session	Ottawa, Canada	17-22 July 1963
Third session	Washington, D.C., USA	18-22 October 1965
Fourth session	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	2-7 October 1967
Fifth session	Ottawa, Canada	15-20 September 1969
Sixth session	Washington, D.C., USA	27-31 March 1972
Seventh session	Mexico, D.F., Mexico	4-8 February 1974
Eighth session	Ottawa, Canada	23-27 February 1976
Ninth session	San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA	13-17 February 1978
Tenth session	Pátzcuaro, Mich., Mexico	18-22 February 1980
Eleventh session	Victoria, B.C., Canada	16-19 February 1982
Twelfth session	El Paso, Texas, USA	21-24 February 1984
Thirteenth session	Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico	3-7 February 1986
Fourteenth session	Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada	14-17 October 1987
Fifteenth session	San Diego, California, USA	6-9 February 1990
Sixteenth session	Cancun, Mexico	10-14 February 1992
Seventeenth session	Jasper (Alberta), Canada	26-30 September 1994
Eighteenth session	Asheville (North Carolina), USA	18-22 November 1996
Nineteenth session	Villahermosa, Mexico	16-20 November 1998
Twentieth session	St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada	12-16 June 2000
Twenti-first session	Kailua-Kona, Hawai, USA	22-26 October 2002
Twenty-second session	Veracruz, Mexico	25-28 October 2004
Twenty-third session	Vancouver, Canada	23-24 October 2006
Twenty-fourth session	San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA	9-13 June 2008
Twenty-fifth session	Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico	3-7 May 2010
Twenty-sixth session	Quebec City, Quebec, Canada	8-9 May 2012
Twenty-seventh session	Madison, Wisconsin, USA	11-13 June 2014
Twenty-eighth session	Campeche, Mexico	11-14 January 2016



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## **OPENING OF THE SESSION (Item 1)**

1. The Twenty-ninth Session of the North American Forest Commission (NAFC) was held in Edmonton/Hinton, Alberta, Canada from 19 to 21 September 2017, at the invitation of the Government of Canada. The session was attended by participants from the three member countries of the Commission, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and observers. The agenda of the session is attached as *Annex A*, and the list of documents submitted for consideration by the Commission as *Annex B*.
2. Mr Glenn Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS) and Chairperson of the Commission, welcomed participants on behalf of the Government of Canada and explained his proposal for the conduct of the session. Bureau of Alternates' (BoA) Chair Bob Jones presented the session logistics.
3. Chair Mason began with opening remarks recognizing that the meeting is taking place on the traditional territory of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation. He provided context as the NAFC meets every two years and has been doing so since 1958 to share domestic priorities among members, and contribute to shaping forest policy, support forest-related activities, and exchange scientific and technical information within North America. Chair Mason expressed Canada's honor to host the session and continue a legacy of international cooperation and forestry engagement and noted that this legacy dates back to the aftermath of World War II when representatives of many nations gathered in Quebec City on 16 October 1945 to found FAO. He highlighted within the stronger on-going North American economic integration and continued challenges for effective ecosystem-based management that the NAFC is a key structure for advancing relevant science-based input to support sustainable forest management within member countries.
4. Chair Mason emphasized the collaboration within the NAFC and in particular, the eight thematic working groups supported by the BoA, drawing on one another's strengths, creating something greater than what could be done separately. He encouraged NAFC participants to continue in that same spirit to address the challenges and exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 2)**

5. The Agenda was adopted as presented, noting that for item 11 – Adoption of the report, a task team was set up with a representative of each country and FAO to draft the session report. The task team drafted the report following the session for review and eventual adoption by the Commissioners.

## **COUNTRY REPORTS (Item 3)**

### **Mexico**

6. Mexico's Alternate, Francisco Quiroz, expressed his gratitude to the Government of Canada and informed that Mr Jorge Rescala Perez recently resigned his position as Director General of the National Forestry Commission and therefore Mr Quiroz was representing Mexico at this session.
7. Alternate Quiroz made a presentation about Mexico's institutional arrangements adopted to contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda commitments, emphasizing creation of a National Council for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development chaired by the President of the Mexican Republic; this Council will coordinate actions for design, implementation and evaluation of strategies, policies, programmes and actions aimed to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and report on the follow-up of its objectives, targets and indicators. A Specialized Technical Committee was also established to coordinate conceptual, methodological, technical and operational work and produce information for designing and evaluating public policies aimed to contribute to the SDGs. Furthermore, two additional bodies were created to include legislators and state governors in these efforts.
8. He highlighted the relevance of forest sector's contributions to climate change mitigation in Mexico by providing relevant results of Mexico's forest emissions and removals as reported in the last Biennial

Update Report (BUR) for UNFCCC, highlighting that forests are a net carbon sink which emission accounted for only 5 percent of national total emissions, while it sequestered about 26 percent of the national total emissions, as result of forest sustainable use, restoration, conservation and protection. He also said that forests are a key element of Mexico's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) as they are expected to contribute with 22 percent of national reduction commitments by 2030, with a goal to reach a 0 percent net deforestation rate by that year.

9. Furthermore, he informed that Mexico had recently concluded the National REDD+ Strategy (ENAREDD+), which was endorsed by the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Climate Change and it soon would be submitted for consideration by the UNFCCC. ENAREDD+ is expected to be part of the public policies for rural development in the country, since collaboration and coordination among agencies and programs in the rural sector are one main line of actions for its implementation.

10. Finally he informed that, in follow-up on results of CBD COP13 held in Mexico in 2016, the National Forestry Commission was advancing towards biodiversity mainstreaming into the forest sector by developing a National Strategy and enhancing its efforts for collecting more information on the state of ecosystems and wildlife through the National Forest and Soils Inventory, and provided some examples on how information on biodiversity was being collected.

## USA

11. Val Mezainis, alternate to USA Commissioner Chief Tony Tooke, thanked NAFC and complimented the generosity of the Canadian people. Alternate Mezainis provided an overview of leadership changes affecting forests in the United States, including a short introduction of the new US Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Purdue, and the Chief of the US Forest Service, Tony Tooke. Alternate Mezainis highlighted Chief Tooke's numerous years of experience in different roles within the US Forest Service, including his leadership experience in the Southern Region as a Regional Forester. Chief Tooke's priorities will likely focus on making US National Forest System lands more productive and resilient, and partnering more on state and private forestry.

12. Alternate Mezainis described the different international initiatives accomplished by the agency, including the USFS Strategic five year plan (2015-2020). The plan is organized into four major areas: *1. Sustain Our Nation's Forests and Grasslands, 2. Deliver Benefits to the Public, 3. Apply Knowledge Globally, and 4. Excel as a High Performing Agency* and aims at successfully meeting the mission of the Forest Service, "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." The four outcome-oriented goals are focused on fostering resilient, adaptive ecosystems that mitigate wildfire risk and conserve open spaces; providing ecosystem services and strengthening communities; exchanging knowledge globally and striving to have a diverse, inclusive and top-performing workforce.

13. Currently, the US Forest Service is responding to several natural disasters, including the hurricanes that hit Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. Alternate Mezainis highlighted how the US Forest Service is providing incident management and law enforcement responders on interagency teams to assess fire protection capabilities, establish and manage logistics for water, food and other resources, and support jurisdictional emergency operations centers, amongst other activities. Additionally, Alternate Mezainis stressed the challenging wildfire season and the continued need to address urban-wildland interface. He also mentioned other areas of importance such as working with communities and markets; continuing to support innovation and the science/policy interface; ensuring forest health. He emphasized the need to continue the existing collaboration with Mexico and Canada. Alternate Mezainis also highlighted urban natural resources management, and the need to make forests and nature relevant to the U.S. population where they live by engaging them with tools that help with urban forest management, such as I-Tree for urban forest inventory and Stew-map for stewardship mapping in urban areas.

## Canada

14. Mr Glenn Mason, Canada's Commissioner referred back to the previous NAFC session in Campeche (January 2016) and the importance of institutional resiliency. He provided an overview of how, since that time, the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) has adapted and developed plans, implemented programs and collaborated in order to be resilient to the new norm of ever-increasing pace of change.

15. Commissioner Mason described an engagement processes used to actively seek a variety of perspectives from multiple stakeholders concerning the Canadian Forest Services' role as forest research organization in Canada.

16. A summary of the main messages from stakeholders included:

- Fundamentals First: the CFS was asked to strengthen its core for a strong science foundation and maintaining trust in Sustainable Forest Management in Canada.
- Lead Nationally: the CFS is the only organization with a national perspective and long-term research – its niche is addressing complex, cross-disciplinary challenges.
- Priority science at our fingertips: support evidence based decision-making.
- Collaborate: common priority setting and shared agendas.
- Share: data and results.
- Networked brainpower: new governance and Human Resource models.
- Widespread relevance: be accessible to forestry practitioners.
- Regional presence: essential to maintain relevance and represent the diversity in the forests and the sector.

17. This consultation provided the Canadian Forest Service with a concrete approach to understanding pressures and drivers of change, seizing emerging opportunities and strengthening partnerships in the face of a constrained operating environment.

18. Commissioner Mason indicated this consolatory and collaborative approach had helped the CFS better understand priorities, drivers of change, signal urgency, reinforce focus and ensure clarity concerning specific desired outcomes that will benefit the whole organization and more broadly, forest sector stakeholders. He also added that this approach is expected to contribute to a better understanding and communication of CFS' priorities. It also enabled alignment with the Canadian government support in the forest sector and its central role in some of the most important issues of our time: combatting climate change, managing pests and wildland fire, driving innovation, expanding trade, supporting biodiversity and creating jobs and economic opportunities for rural and Indigenous communities.

19. In the context of pursuing a collaborative approach to understand change and charting a resilient future, whether it is fire, pests, species at risk, or trade, Commissioner Mason also highlighted the building of partnerships and collaborations to enhance understanding of the policy environment and research needs and help set priorities. He challenged the Commission by asking if there were improvements to be made in order to maximize the use of this Regional Forestry Commission. Commissioner Mason emphasized a constant dialogue between researchers from different institutions (both within and between countries), which served as a reminder of the complexity and immensity of the problems facing forests and the forest sector and the urgent need for collaboration as no one organization could possibly solve these problems alone. He added such a dialogue also facilitates the generation of new ideas and new ways of thinking about complex issues.

## FAO (Item 3.4)

20. The secretariat reported on recent developments including the outcomes of the 155<sup>th</sup> session of the FAO Council and the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference (the presentation is available on the session's website). Among the many notable decisions, particular attention should be paid to the Medium Term Plan 2018-2021 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19, as key documents determining the focuses

and activities of FAO in the coming years, which are fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The flat nominal budget for 2018-19 requires increased attention to technical cooperation programmes and countries were invited to consider voluntary contributions to help address emerging priorities.

21. FAO also provided a complete report on the activities undertaken in response to the decisions of the 28<sup>th</sup> session of NAFC. The activities are described in detail in document FO: NAFC/2017/2.

22. FAO presented preparatory steps for implementing COFO's and the Conference's decision on enhancing work on temperate and boreal forests and the request to present options in this regard for consideration by the next session of COFO. Based on a document prepared for the European Forestry Commission, the relevance of temperate and boreal forests was described, together with the ongoing work and the potential areas of activities including monitoring, valuation, restoration, enhancing SFM, forest-based adaptation and mitigation, viable remote forest-dependent settlements and urban and peri-urban forestry. The Commission was invited to identify its priorities and advise on focuses and mechanisms of international collaboration.

23. The Alternate Quiroz thanked FAO presentation on progress report on the implementation of decisions adopted by FAO Council and Conference, noting that recommendations resulting from the last COFO session have been duly supported in those governing bodies; also thanked the progress report on recommendations adopted by NAFC at the previous session; congratulating FAO for its work in complying with recommendations of the Regional Commissions and COFO, noting that this feedback is very important in assessing FAO's performance.

24. He also commended FAO for its work in developing new tools and publications for monitoring and assessing forest resources, as well as for better understanding of its social and economic contributions, and highlighted the important work of FAO's leading the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and their important contributions and support to the United Nations Forum on Forests, with particular emphasis on the working done in identification of a core set of forest indicators. Alternate Mezainis also thanked FAO for their presentation and progress by the FAO Council and Conference.

25. Commissioner Mason acknowledged and congratulated the efforts of FAO in advancing the decisions adopted by FAO Council and Conference, as well as the advancement of recommendations supported by the NAFC during the 28<sup>th</sup> session. In particular, the work relating to the Forest Resources Assessment, the financial support for regional commission workshop on building institutional resiliency and foresight capacity for national forest agencies, the overall cooperation with the regional forestry commissions and the continued work of the SFM Toolbox.

#### **REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF ALTERNATES (Item 4)**

26. The report is available on the FAO website.

27. The Chair of the Bureau of Alternates, Bob Jones thanked his BOA colleagues for their support during this recent intersessional term of the NAFC. BoA Chair Jones highlighted such collegial and active participation resulted in the successful completion of many tasks as set forth by the Commissioners, including but not limited to:

- review of the Atmospheric Change WG Charter and membership as well as facilitating links to climate change as a cross cutting issue;
- promoting and supporting participation of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission at the Fire Management WG meetings;
- assisting with membership renewal within the Forest Genetic Resources WG;
- review of participating in a global forest communicators network;
- providing interim chair support and leading international cooperation activities with the Urban Forest Programs Ad-hoc WG;
- providing guidance to the ad hoc Resiliency WG, and
- responding to all WG funding requests to initiate or complete activities.

28. It was also noted that since January 2016, over US\$40,000 in funding and support was provided to the NAFC WGs, with much gratitude being extended to the USFS and FAO for their significant contributions.

29. BoA Ciar Jones noted the BoA members are responsible for looking after the operational aspects of the NAFC, supporting the development of the agenda for Commission meetings, monitoring and coordinating the activities of the working groups, and making recommendations to the Commission. BoA Chair Jones added that as a BoA member and under the future Chair of Alternate Mezanis, he looks forward to continuing support to the Commission in advancement of North American regional forest issues, interests and challenges, as well as communicate issues of importance for consideration in global fora led by FAO.

30. In recognition of the work of past NAFC members, the BoA collectively provided awards to:

- Tom Tidwell, former Commissioner for the United States of America;
- Jorge Rescala, former Commissioner for Mexico
- Peter Besseau as former BoA member;
- Bill de Groot, Tom Harbour, and Dale Dague as former members of the Fire Management Working Group;
- Steve McNulty and Richard Birdsey as former members of the Climate, Atmospheric Change and Forest WG; and,
- Brad Smith as former member of the Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment WG

31. Alternate Quiroz recognized the work done by Bob Jones chairing the Bureau of Alternate by guiding several working groups during the renewal of their mandates and the development of its strategic plans, highlighting the work of Rick Scott as working group liaison and once again, thanking the US Forest Service for their support in this matter.

32. He also appreciated the funding provided by FAO to support development of some WG activities and to facilitate participation of WG Chairpersons in the workshop on Institutional Resilience, as well as for the offer to finance participation of one representative from each country at the first face-to-face meeting of the North American Forest Communicators Network.

33. He noted that Bureau of Alternates is a valuable contribution to the NAFC governance structure, which allows to timely follow-up decisions and recommendations adopted by the Commission in the intersessional period, recommended that the BoA continue to provide support in the consultation process among the three countries and other necessary actions to support the work of the NAFC Chair at the COFO Steering Committee.

## **REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUPS (Item 5)**

### **5.1 Climate, Atmospheric Change and Forests**

34. Alternate Quiroz endorsed the approach adopted in the new Strategic Plan and recognized the effort to link with other ongoing regional initiatives. He also encouraged the WG to develop tasks that contribute to generate concrete information and outputs on relevant climate change issues in the forest sector, requesting the WG to revitalize its activity in communication and prioritize reviewing and updating the membership, as appropriate; he also encouraged WG members to conduct a face-to-face meeting in the near future as a starting point.

35. He recommended to the BoA to work with this group to review the proposal for actions to be carried out over the next two years, including assignment of specific tasks and responsible member for each of them, and identification of their expected results.

36. Alternate Mezainis clarified that the US nominated three representatives to this WG several months ago, and that those members are listed in the updated factsheets and website. The US delegation concurred with the plan for the BoA to follow and support this WG more closely.

37. Commissioner Mason recognized the efforts of this WG to revise the strategic plan, renew membership and engage with other regional initiatives with similar objectives. He appreciated the considerations made to liaise closely with other initiatives to ensure coordinated and synergistic efforts in climate change during the revision process of the WG Strategic Plan.

38. Concerning the NAFC 29 Working Group report, the Canadian delegate Rich Verbisky acknowledged receiving notification of the three new US representatives nominated to this WG and committed to revising the NAFC 29 working group report to reflect the new US members.

### **5.1.1. Integrated Modelling and Assessment of Climate Change Mitigation Options in the Forest Sector (Commission for Environmental Cooperation project): Key outcomes and the way ahead**

39. Alternate Quiroz congratulated experts of the three institutions who participated in this project, noting that its results will contribute to have a better understanding of the potential of the forest sector in climate change mitigation, including actions beyond ecosystem management; recognizing the importance of having such tools, he proposed to the BoA to work jointly with the WG to review the relevance of incorporating this line of action into a WG work plan and invite the experts who participated in this project to join as members of the group.

40. He proposed that the BoA and the WG could explore potential financing opportunities to continue the development of this and other activities of the WG.

41. Alternate Mezainis also congratulated Carolyn Smyth and the important work that has been accomplished through the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). The US Delegation expressed some concerns about how to proceed with this proposal, given the large budget requested and the lack of participation from WG members. The US delegation concurred with the idea of exploring areas of collaboration and building on the good work that has already been accomplished by the CEC.

42. Commissioner Mason thanked Carolyn Smyth for sharing the trilateral work of the CEC. He noted forests of North America are experiencing unprecedented changes in climate, natural and human disturbance regimes, and management. The understanding of the effects of these interacting changes is improving but still rudimentary and insufficient to provide sound scientific guidance to forest managers and policy makers. In this context, he endorsed fostering international cooperation in the field of detection and effects of climate changes on forests, within North America among scientists and forest managers, policy makers, other natural resource agencies, and related tri-lateral programs on areas of common interest, such as the CEC and the North American Carbon Program.

43. He supported the recommendations of fellow commissioners for the WG to explore areas of collaboration and building on the good work that has already been accomplished by the CEC. In the area of potential financing opportunities and given the limited availability of resources, he recommended considering a more modest “component” or “phased” approach to seeking financial support as an alternative to pursuing a larger, single project for the advancement of next generation tools.

### **5.2 Fire Management**

44. Alternate Quiroz welcomed the new WG members from Canada and USA, recognizing that the work of this group has been consistent and productive, emphasizing that its results have also benefited other regions beyond North America.

45. He emphasized that, thanks to the work of this group, the Memorandum of Understanding and its Operational Plan for the exchange of resources between Canadian and Mexican participants could be

formulated, which allowed Mexico to mobilize 311 people (between specialist and fire fighters) in 2016 and 2017, in order to support suppression of large-scale wildfires in Canada, which represents the largest international mobilization of human resources in the history of Mexico regarding wildfires; he also noted that this collaboration has helped CONAFOR to increase its capacity to timely respond to other requests for international aid, such as the case of Chile at the beginning of 2017, emphasizing that Mexico has become a cooperating country that supports efforts for building technical and institutional capacities in the Mesoamerican region under the framework of the Mesoamerican Strategy of Environmental Sustainability.

46. In this regard, he thanked FAO and the USFS for their financial support, and encouraged to continue to support, as far as possible, participation of specialists from countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region in the meetings of the WG, and recommended to continue promoting international cooperation.

47. Alternate Mezainis congratulated the WG on their continued success, especially with the transition of new members from Canada and the U.S. The U.S. delegation also urged FAO to fill the FAO position that oversees global fire capacity, given the importance of the topic, and agreed with the Canadian delegation on the importance of working with youth, indigenous communities and women in the topic of fire management and prevention.

48. Commissioner Mason appreciated the outstanding work this WG continues to provide. He noted the general trend of increasing demands on each country's wildfire management agencies and increasing wildfire activity globally due to climate change. In this context, he encouraged the WG to focus on addressing the challenges of increased demand for sharing resources between countries, advanced planning of emerging risk, and efficient mechanisms for knowledge sharing and resource sharing bilaterally, regionally and where possible, with other regions around the world.

### **5.3 Forest Genetic Resources**

49. Alternate Quiroz expressed his appreciation to the WG members for their effectiveness in developing activities aimed to contribute to policy design on sustainable forest management and to contribute to the achievement of the global goals on conservation of forest genetic resources.

50. Recognizing the cross-cutting nature of the issues addressed by this WG, he supported WG members' initiative to seek synergies with other NAFC Working Groups.

51. He also appreciated the support of the USFS for the funding granted to carry out the field tests of the project for assisted migration of populations of *Abies religiosa*, as part of the activity aimed to develop Guidelines for assisted colonization and assisted migration of forest species and populations in response to climate change.

52. Finally, he supported the WG proposal to participate at the extent of their capacities in the FAO initiative to contribute to update the report on the State of World's Forest Genetic Resources, requesting FAO to provide technical assistance and, as far as possible, financial support for the preparation of national and regional reports when required.

53. Alternate Mezainis congratulated the WG as a top performer and emphasized the importance of cooperation between the three countries, adding that, for example, the origin of pine is in Mexico.

54. Commissioner Mason congratulated the WG on their achievements and recognized the good practice of maintaining a current work plan with specific tasks assigned to members as well as ensuring the right people are members of the WG.

#### **5.4 Forest Insects and Diseases and Invasive Plants**

55. Alternate, Quiroz welcomed and supported the updated WG Strategic Plan, encouraging the WG to develop its activities accordingly, through implementation of specific tasks and/or products.

56. He supported recommendation of the WG to review the relevance of continuing its work on exotic invasive plants, in collaboration with the BoA.

57. If it is so decided, he recommended the WG to aim its efforts in actions focused on the management of invasive plants affecting North American forest ecosystems only.

58. He also supported the initiative to seek coordination with the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), noting that in the case of Mexico, the Forest Health Direction of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources will be invited to participate, as the responsible entity at national level, and which participates in the NAPPO meetings.

59. Alternate Mezainis emphasized that this has been a successful group that has had accomplished activities and continued to exchange information. He suggested that the WG should just focus on insects, instead of both plants and insects.

60. Commissioner Mason congratulated the WG for the advancements made in the area of forest insects and disease adding that their achievements suggest this area is a priority for all three countries. He also expressed his appreciation for the efforts to renew the WG strategic plan with a focusing on relevant areas of work such as:

- Advancing forest health monitoring and analysis
- Fostering best management practices for invasive plants
- Addressing impacts and adaptation to variations in climate and forest conditions
- Facilitating intergovernmental coordination to address shared forest pest issues
- Maintaining scientific capacity to support science-based programs and policies
- Addressing urban forest health issues and mobilizing citizens.

#### **5.5 Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment**

61. Alternate Quiroz expressed his appreciation to the WG for its constant efforts to harmonize forest inventory databases of the three countries in order to facilitate the generation of reports at regional level, noting that technical-scientific collaboration and promotion of compatible approaches in inventory and forest monitoring set a unique precedent for creation of a regional forest database, technically and scientifically documented for three national forest inventories making possible to share information worldwide through an online reporting tool.

62. He also expressed his gratitude to Canada and the United States for financial support provided for building the database, as well as to FAO for funding publication of the brochure on Regional Forest Database, which will be widely distributed in the region.

63. He invited the WG to continue promoting the development of the database and online tools, encouraging participation of other NAFC WG to meet a broader range of cross-border data harmonization needs.

64. He also urged the group to continue working with FAO on the process of the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020, by formulating national and regional reports, and to continue its contributions to the improvement of the FRA reporting process to adequately reflect contributions of forest sector to environmental, social and economic development at different levels.



65. Acknowledging that the final structure of FRA2020 will be presented to the national correspondents during the FRA2020 global launch meeting to be held in early 2018 in Mexico, he requested WG members to participate in the process for testing the new platform, and to collaborate with FAO, including by participating in experts discussions related to the definition of primary forests under the FRA and the development of the global core set of forest-related indicators, among other issues.

66. Alternate Mezinis thanked Mr. Stinson for his presentation and praised the WG, especially on their clear strategy and management.

67. Commissioner Mason also congratulated the WG for its leadership and hard work, noting strong institutional support in all three countries making possible to work closely together, to the benefit of all three institutions and all three countries. He added this WG exemplifies how significant global leadership can be exerted by working collaboratively.

68. He emphasized forest inventory and monitoring are long-term activities that require practitioners and institutions to take a long-term perspective. Commissioner Mason also raised the importance of communicating working group activities and successes to a larger audience and congratulated the WG for the publication of the brochure on Regional Forest Database in an effort to make their work more accessible to others.

## **5.6 Silviculture**

69. Alternate Quiroz acknowledge that this WG has generated important products that contribute to improving forestry and also noted that its work is essential to update and validate best forestry practices aimed to add value to forest and their products.

70. He emphasized that holding WG's annual meetings jointly with technical and/or academic events is a good practice that promotes exchange of knowledge, experiences and lessons learned beyond the scope of the WG, urging all other groups to analyze the feasibility of adopting this approach in its future meetings.

71. He encouraged the WG to continue promoting exchange and formulation of technical documents on topics of interest to the region, which would contribute to disseminating knowledge about forestry in North America.

## **5.7 Resiliency (ad hoc)**

72. Alternate Quiroz stressed the importance of this group to support the forest institutions of the three countries to identify future challenges in a changing forest environment that influences how each country manages with its natural resources to satisfy their different needs and the ways in which governments respond through formulation of public policies aimed to promote sustainable use, conservation and/or restoration of forest ecosystems.

73. Recalling the informal workshop on 18 September he noted both the article and the workshop report will contribute to a constructive reflection on the future of the forest sector and its institutions, noting that the workshop report could serve as the basis document for developing a new work plan for the WG with a renewed mandate; in this regard he also supported recommendation to extend its term as an ad hoc WG.

74. Liz Mayhew from the U.S. delegation thanked the WG for their work, especially for the thought provoking workshop on 18 September. She summarized that the keys issues that were addressed at the workshop were the resiliency of staff and institutions, as well as the idea of how to communicate effectively to the public. She pointed out that the WG is at a crossroads so should prepare a proposal for the BOA and Commissioners to consider.

75. Commissioner Mason thanked the Ad-hoc WG for their innovative efforts in completing the tasks under their time bound mandate. He noted the NAFC resiliency workshop affirmed the importance of

building foresight capacity into forest federal forest agencies so they can better anticipate and prepare for change, and benefit from visioning. The workshop and foresight paper developed by the Ad-hoc working group were opportunities to discuss shared challenges and priorities for the future of federal forest agencies, and to identify opportunities for collaboration to build foresight and institutional resiliency together. He also noted that institutional resiliency was discussed at the last COFO session as well as in 2009. While recognizing the benefits of involving other countries and use existing platforms, such as Megaflorestais, he also suggested that FAO could help coordinate such initiatives.

76. Commissioner Mason recommended the Ad-hoc WG to develop a proposal to extend its mandate and with advice from the BoA, develop a workplan to continue the advancement of institutional resiliency for approval by the Commissioners.

### **5.8 Urban Forests (ad hoc)**

77. Alternate Quiroz recognized the relevant work of Alternate Mezainis leading this WG by providing guidance and support, and thanked the USFS for supporting participation in the International Seminar on Urban Forest Programs.

78. He supported the WG proposal to work on identification of non-governmental organizations or community groups working on social aspects of urban forestry, in order to strengthen community commitment and management of urban natural resources; he also considered relevant to explore the use of technology for assessment of urban trees and forest areas, which could be used at community level by local professionals, students or citizens in general, inviting WG members to consider the potential of collaborative citizen and community projects to collect data and relevant information on urban areas, including, for example, location and measurement of trees, identification of species and monitoring of pests or diseases among other activities.

79. Alternate Quiroz expressed his gratitude to the USFS for supporting adaptation of i-Tree Eco to Mexico's conditions as well as his interest in further development and implementation of this tool; he also expressed Mexico's interest in exploring development of other tools such as MyTree app developed by the Canadian Forest Service.

80. Alternate Quiroz agreed to change WG name to Urban Forest Programs and supported recommendation to give it a permanent status as NAFC working group.

81. Alternate Mezainis said that the success and energy behind this WG has been a result of having BoA members help get the group off the ground and provide guidance. He concurred with making this an official WG.

82. Commissioner Mason thanked the USFS for their leadership and support for Urban Forest Programs within North America. He noted the importance of: exchanging information on issues around urban forestry and community engagement; identifying and taking advantage of opportunities for increasing scientific and technical collaboration in urban forestry, and; strengthening outreach and awareness of urban forestry issues within cities. He highlighted Canada's recent update of the MyTree app and the Trees of Canada and asked the Commission for support in recommending that permanent NAFC working group status be given to the Urban Forest Program.

### **FAO ITEMS (Item 6)**

#### **Global Processes (Item 6.1)**

83. The secretariat presented document FO: NAFC/2017/5 describing major recent global processes including the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the UN Biodiversity Conference, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the outcome of UNFF12. The presentation is available on the session's website.

84. Recognizing that recent global policy developments provide an opportunity to continue strengthening the role of the forest sector as a key element to achieve the 2030 Agenda, Alternate Quiroz noted that greater attention is needed to consistency and synergy among forest policy fora to move from declarations and commitments to effective action.
85. In this regard, he recognized the important work of FAO and COFO to provide countries with guidance and technical assistance to implement these commitments, and requested FAO to assist countries in improving their capacity to monitor forest indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as well as to highlight their contributions to the 2030 Agenda in a more comprehensive and documented way.
86. Recalling the results of CDB COP13, he requested FAO and COFO to continue their work to promote inter-sectoral dialogue, including with other FAO Technical Committees and relevant international initiatives, in order to support efforts to mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into productive sectors, particularly forestry, at all levels and scales, by involving stakeholders through cross-sectional platforms.
87. Noting and supporting recommendations in the document presented by FAO, he endorsed the invitation to the countries to participate in monitoring forest indicators and report their progress in the implementation of SDG 15 for its review at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018.
88. He invited the Commissioners to work together to provide regional inputs for the development of future sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests as well as to provide inputs on the contribution of forests in the process of reviewing the progress of Agenda 2030 and its Objectives to be carried out by the HLPF in 2018.
89. With regard to the recent events around the GCF, Alternate Quiroz affirmed that Mexico recently completed its National REDD+ Strategy, advancing in fulfilling requirements established in the Warsaw Framework for accessing results-based payments, including financing from the GCF results-based payment pilot program.
90. He informed that Mexico is preparing to report its voluntary national contributions and also to present its voluntary report on contributions to the Global Forest Goals and related targets at the next UNFF session.
91. US Delegate Conje thanked FAO for their continued efforts and leadership on working to identify appropriate datasets for the forest-related SDGs indicators; as well as FAO's work on facilitating the process to develop a global core set of forest-related indicators. She noted that USFS specialists continue to be involved in both processes, and recognized that SDG Indicator 15.2.1 (progress toward SFM) continues to be a complex indicator to measure.
92. She also recognized FAO's continued leadership on cross-sectoral work on forests. In regards to the upcoming International Conference on Halting Deforestation and Increasing Forest Cover to be held in 2018, she asked how FAO is reaching out to non-traditional partners; and also if the conference will cover the theme of illegal logging and associated trade.
93. FAO explained that the conference is still an evolving concept and an ongoing dialogue with CPF members who will be the organizers of the different sessions. At present major thematic blocks are likely to include drivers of deforestation, sustainable/green supply chains, forest-smart policy frameworks, governance frameworks and financing to upscale progress. The conference is expected to attract attention beyond the forest sector and since it is planned to be with participation on invitation, these invitations will be sent to the broadest possible audience. Also, there is an evolving collaboration among FAO departments in making contributions to the conference. Illegal logging and associated trade are certainly on the agenda and are likely to be addressed in multiple ways under the different themes.

94. UNFF secretariat Barbara Tavora-Jainchil noted UNFF's intent to better engage regional platforms, such as the Regional Forestry Commissions, in informing UNFF's work and priorities, and requested inputs.

95. The Commissioners then asked the BoA to take on this request at their next meeting.

96. The US requested the UNFF secretariat to clarify whether the input they were requesting from the regional commissions was specific to the next UNFF session theme(s). And, if so, to provide the regional commissions with the theme(s) and specific questions they wanted the regional commissions to address. The US also noted the need to work with FAO and the BoA to ensure that the item was added to the BoA/Commission's agenda to allocate adequate time to address this request from UNFF.

97. Commissioner Mason indicated Canada will report in detail on forest contributions to the SDGs under review in 2018 through the UNFF. Broader messaging may also be provided via the Global Affairs Department. He added Canada is pleased to contribute CAD50K towards the CPF Conference, which will provide not only an opportunity to engage across sectors, but also consider and contribute to the different agreements and priorities in a substantive manner.

98. Commissioner Mason also indicated Canada supports all five requests to FAO<sup>1</sup> and that regional input to future UNFF sessions presents a good opportunity for the different FAO Forestry Commissions. He added due to time constraints, it was recommended this topic be added to the agenda of the next BoA call for further consideration and to provide a recommendation back to the Commissioner regarding appropriate uptake if needed.

99. FAO noted that also in the past, in the spirit of previous COFO recommendations the secretariat prepared a consolidated response to the UNFF reporting requests and these reports were submitted to the UNFF secretariat and posted on the UNFF website. Similarly, the COFO secretariat, together with the secretariats of other FAO Technical Committees and governing bodies, regularly provides input to the HLPF in response to the invitation of the President of ECOSOC.

### **The CFS High-level Panel of Experts study on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition (Item 6.2)**

100. The secretariat presented document FO: NAFC/2017/6 explaining the findings of the report of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition on sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition. The presentation is available on the session's website.

101. Recognizing the complexity of land use in rural areas and highlighting Mexico's experience in design and implementation its National REDD+ Strategy, Alternate Quiroz stressed that it is important to continue strengthening cross-sectoral coordination among agencies working with agricultural issues, through alignment of programs and provision of financial support and technical assistance to develop land management options under an integrated landscape approach.

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- i. Invite countries to promote and monitor progress on the forest-related indicators and to report on progress during the HLPF review of SDG 15 in 2018.
- ii. Take note of the forest-related outcomes of COP22 and invite countries to consider the recommendations of the Forest Action Day to foster enabling environments for cooperation among multiple stakeholders; facilitate implementation of open access tools for monitoring forests and land use, such as Collect Earth; and recognize NDCs as an opportunity to mainstream REDD+ into national planning processes.
- iii. Take note of the forest-related outcomes of the CBD COP 13 and invite countries to continue their efforts in implementing sustainable forest management as the forest sector's contribution to the mainstreaming of biodiversity.
- iv. Consider ways to facilitate the implementation of the outcome of UNFF12 and provide a regional input to UNFF13 and 14;
- v. Recommend COFO to consider, in collaboration with other FAO Technical Committees, addressing the opportunities for translating the outcomes of international negotiations into concrete actions.

102. In this regard, he requested FAO, in coordination with the relevant national institutions, to undertake extensive dissemination of the results of the study, particularly among decision-makers, in order to promote greater integration of sectors involved in land-use planning to take into account the benefits provided by forests ecosystem services to food security and nutrition; he also supported the request to FAO to support countries in identifying, documenting and disseminating best practices for integration of food and nutritional security criteria in forest management and development of technical guidelines with this purpose.

103. US Delegate Conje noted the importance of this cross-sectoral piece of work between FAO and the Commission on World Food Security. US experts, including the US National Agroforestry Center, were involved in reviewing and providing input to the report and are engaged in the ongoing policy convergence process. Ms. Conje agreed with Mexico that the report was well written, but was technically dense, and suggested that it may be helpful for FAO/CFS to invest in a communication strategy in order to make it more digestible to policy makers and stakeholders outside the forest and food security sectors. In regards to future actions by FAO, she suggested that FAO focus their efforts on metrics definitions (recommendation 1b and 1d of the report) and incorporating relevant food security and nutrition datasets into the FRA. She noted that FAO could also play an important role on 2a, 2b, and category 4 of the report's recommendations.

104. Commissioner Mason shared Canada's recognition of the importance sustainable forestry plays in food security and nutrition. He welcomed the report and view of forests and food security as an important topic for increasing the relevance, visibility and contribution of forests to sustainable development. He thanked FAO for shouldering much of the translation costs of the report, which may not have been made available otherwise. He added, Canada is pleased to note that they are already involved in many of the recommendations in the report, including promoting restoration to limit soil erosion, engaging in broad stakeholder consultations for forest management planning, and working with our indigenous peoples to generate forest-based employment, as examples.

105. Lastly, Commissioner Mason stressed that the forest and agriculture sectors should be working together rather than competitors as both forestry and agriculture are fundamental parts to the solution of sustainable land use policy. In this context, he encouraged FAO to support countries in enhancing the contributions of forests and trees to food security, in documenting and disseminating best practices, and for further work on mainstreaming food security objectives into SFM policies and practices.

### **A new strategic document for FAO in forestry (Item 6.3)**

106. The secretariat presented document FO: NAFC/2017/7. The presentation is available on the session's website.

107. Alternate Quiroz emphasized that a new strategic document for the forest sector should fully recognize its contributions to the implementation of 2030 Agenda, proposing strategies and actions which promote strengthening inter-institutional and cross-cutting dialogue to improve planning related to land use and implementation of actions that improve integrated land management, as well as to ensure that FAO departments take into account their relationship with forest sector when planning and designing policies and programs, and should encourage adoption of this vision by FAO member countries.

108. He also agreed on the terms of the approach and structure of the new strategic document as proposed.

109. He noted that FAO should continue to strengthen its advisory and technical assistance activities, including integration and analysis of information relevant to the forest sector and its "translation" into recommendations for decision-makers.

110. Finally, he stressed that it is important that the new strategic document considers appropriate measures for the development and use of tools for knowledge management, as is the case of the SFM Toolbox, for the implementation of sustainable forest management, as well as to improve and strengthen the

communication and dissemination of information relevant to the sector, supporting efforts to improve forest-related education on a global scale.

111. US delegate Conje noted that the US supported the development of a new strategic document for forestry during the last COFO meeting. However, in reviewing the background paper, there was concern that there was an overly strong focus on formulating the new Strategic document around the Durban World Forestry Congress (2015) “2050 Vision” statement, which was not a widely negotiated document. While this vision statement does have some useful elements, the US would prefer to see a new strategic document on forestry that is focused on how FAO can bring significant contributions to FAO’s mission while also contributing to the SDGs, and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests, while complementing and adding value to work done by other organizations.

112. She also asked if the new Strategic document would address the synergies and opportunities between FAO Forestry/COFO, and other relevant forest bodies housed at FAO including the International Popular Commission (IPC), the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-based Industries (ACFSI), and the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF).

113. Commissioner Mason agreed the time is right to review and update the FAO Forestry strategic document and is pleased to see such comprehensive consideration of the different international agreements, mechanisms and priorities. He supports the proposed elements for the new strategic document, and encouraged FAO to consider to clearly outline in the section on FAO core functions FAO Forestry’s niche vis-à-vis other international organizations focused on SFM and the Sustainable Development Goals.

114. With respect to operationalizing the various commitments and identifying normative and operational functions for FAO, as stated at the COFO Steering Committee, he felt that FAO Forestry’s plate is already quite full and welcomed a new initiative to prioritize programming. There is a clear overlap between the different agreements and commitments and Commissioner Mason therefore suggested FAO to keep on with already identified work such as cross-sectoral collaboration, forest and landscape restoration (including agroforestry), technical assistance, land tenure, forest reporting and streamlining, as well as communication.

115. Commissioner Mason asked if Regional Commissions would be offered an opportunity to review a draft of the plan and possibly provide coordinated input.

116. The secretariat thanked the Commission for the thoughtful guidance and explained that the objective of the current round of discussions, which would take place in each Commission based on the same document, to collect ammunition and guidance for drafting a draft strategic paper for the consideration of COFO. Based on this input the Committee will decide on whether the strategic documents is sufficiently mature for adoption or would merit from further work. Would the latter be the case the RFCs were having another opportunity to contribute, otherwise the current discussion should be considered as the only opportunity for commission-level input.

117. In response to the question from the US the secretariat explained that based on the guidance from countries the strategic document should consider the roles and opportunities for the different forestry statutory bodies, and noted that the three examples represent rather different entities, as IPC is an Art XIV body and as such, is largely independent, ACSFI is an Art VI body and has a similar legal status as the RFCs, while FFF is a programme hosted by FAO. However they are a good example representing the diversity of bodies and instruments which should be duly recognized in a comprehensive strategic paper.

#### **FRA 2020 and efforts for reducing reporting burden by streamlining international forest reporting (Item 6.4.)**

118. The secretariat presented document FO: NAFC/2017/8. The presentation is available on the session’s website.

119. Alternate Quiroz expressed his satisfaction on the progress made in follow-up COFO's recommendation to improve and streamline the reporting process on forest issues, identifying synergies and reducing countries' reporting burden. He supported the approach adopted by FAO to develop a more efficient and focused reporting process to facilitate generation of information on key forest variables and indicators in a transparent and up-to-date manner, particularly through the use of the common forest resources questionnaire, which promotes the use of common terminology, increasing consistency in collection and use of information in the forest sector, at different levels.

120. He encouraged the WG on Inventory, Monitoring and Evaluation to continue its collaboration in reviewing and discussing the content of the collaborative FRA2020 questionnaire, including its terms and definitions.

121. He reiterated Mexico's commitment to participate in the national reporting process for FRA2020, including reviewing and validating of remote sensing products, and requested FAO to invite its member countries to do the same, as well as to promote synergies to avoid duplication of efforts.

122. Taking note on actions undertaken and expressing his satisfaction for the progress made to date, Alternate Quiroz affirmed Mexico's support to the proposals for requesting FAO to continue working in developing the global core set of forest-related indicators in coordination with CPF, which will be useful in the reporting progress in achieving the UNFSP Global Forest Goals and associated targets, as well as the SDGs. He requested FAO to present progress and results of this work at the next session of COFO and UNFF for consideration and analysis by member countries.

123. In the same way, he also supported actions to facilitate reporting and improve use of information collected, including development and use of remote sensing technologies and capacity building for its efficient use by FAO member countries.

124. Highlighting the knowledge and experience of the experts of the NAFC Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Evaluation WG, he encouraged the WG to continue its contributions to the improvement of FRA.

125. Finally, he informed that Mexico will host the FRA2020 global launching workshop to be held next year, noting ongoing collaboration with FAO on event organization and logistical issues.

126. US Delegate Conje expressed that the U.S. experts continue to be involved in the FRA2020 process and the work done on the global core set of forest-related indicators. She noted that the initial reaction by USFS experts on the global core set was that it was a good start, but that production forestry measures were weak and that more work needs to be done on definitions, especially in regards to "disturbed area" and "species endangerment." The US appreciated the new on-line FRA reporting platform, in particular the feature which allows for self-explanatory documenting of the reported values. The U.S. continues to emphasize the importance of re-examining and broadening the FRA definition of "forest employment" in order to fully capture how forests contribute to job creation and sustainable development.

127. US Delegate Conje wondered whether the FRA platform is replacing the CFRQ questionnaire. She also inquired how/if the on-line FRA reporting platform will be used in SDG reporting, as most of the forest -related SDG indicators draw on datasets reported within the FRA.

128. As exemplified by the State of Canada's Forests Annual Report, Commissioner Mason expressed Canada's strong belief in consistent and transparent forest reporting. He reaffirmed Canada's active participation in the FRA2020 reporting process and particularly welcomed the new online platform as a means to enhance transparency and streamline reporting efforts, noting Canadian indicator experts have been active participants in the development of the global core set and the refinement of FRA variable definitions. Canada hosted a workshop in Ottawa in 2016 and participated in both the Rome and Finland workshops. Canada especially appreciates the benefits that come from working closely together with our colleagues from the US and Mexico. By working together, our three countries are making an important contribution to the world's understanding of the state of our forests and their importance.

129. Commissioner Mason extended appreciation to FAO for leadership in the development of the global core set of forest-related indicators and encouraged it to continue. While the list of 20 indicators is longer than originally intended (10-15 indicators were envisaged), he was pleased to see that biophysical, economic and social elements are included.

130. Commissioner Mason agreed with the five points of guidance for FAO to continue supporting the development of the global core set, the online FRA platform, strengthening the CFRQ, making country specific remote data sets available for national validation, and to initiate capacity building for remote sensing activities in developing countries. He added, Canada has offered to pilot the platform after its launch in Mexico this fall and asked how does FAO intend to undertake annual reporting on the forest-related SDGs without increasing reporting burdens?

131. Finally, Commissioner Mason extended appreciation and thanks to FAO for the appendix demonstrating the relation between the global core set and international policy commitments, which is both useful and succinct.

132. The secretariat thanked the Commission for the strong support to FRA and in particular for the encouragement to proceed with the development of the global core set. In responding to the questions the secretariat explained that the CFRQ will continue to play its role, the online platform is only a tool to make the use of the CFRQ easier and more efficient. The online platform also provides an opportunity to report on those SDG indicators which are collected a part of the FRA process, providing the same level of transparency and offering the same validation and quality control procedures.

133. The secretariat also explained that reporting procedures related to the SDG indicators are determined outside FAO therefore FAO only supports the implementation of those decisions by providing tools to facilitate countries actions in this regard, such as the online platform. The secretariat also invited countries to consider encouraging the use of the global core set in governing bodies other than COFO and UNFF so that the set could indeed support the provision of information for multiple processes.

134. The secretariat thanked Mexico for hosting the launching event of FRA2020.

### **Temperate and Boreal Forest Work**

135. In regards to the topic of temperate and boreal forests, given its relevance to the three countries, Mexico recommended that the Silviculture Working Group support the Commission in providing guidance to FAO's on this particular topic.

136. Alternate Mezainis expressed concerns about how this work will be supported financially, and emphasized the need to have budgets and finances accompany these initiatives. US delegate Jennifer Conje questioned the need for a formal temperate and boreal working group within FAO, noting that there is a way to incorporate more temperate and boreal work into FAO's work programme without establishing a formal working group. She also recognized that there is quite a lot being done by UNECE, the Montreal Process and other forums on temperate forests. Therefore, if work needs to be done, the focus should be on boreal and that FAO should work closely with other organizations and processes, including the Circumboreal Working Group. One potential activity that FAO could undertake, which was relevant to FAO's work programme and strengths, is to pursue cooperative approaches for multinational inventory systems and metadata on existing national datasets to assist in comparisons between the countries from a circumboreal perspective. She also emphasized the importance of engaging relevant native and indigenous peoples in the circumboreal region in the work.

137. Commissioner Mason recognized the boreal as a zone is well studied and has significant research resources devoted to its biophysical state. He highlighted Canada's has been participating in discussions on circumboreal cooperation with Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation and the United States for several years through the Circumboreal Working Group to explore opportunities for further enhanced



collaboration and information sharing amongst our national forest agencies and research institutes. He reaffirmed a commitment to continue working with our colleagues and FAO to advance boreal interests in international forest fora. At this time, however, preference would be to continue working through the existing Circumboreal Working Group and other mechanisms rather than establish a new, formal open-ended working group under FAO which would require new resources or displace existing work.

#### **FORESTRY ACTIVITIES / EVENTS OF INTEREST TO THE REGION (Item 7)**

138. Alternate Quiroz extended an invitation to Canada, USA and FAO to participate in *Expo Forestal* 2018, which will be held from 10-12 October 2018 in Guadalajara city, highlighting that participations of US Forest Service and an expert from FP Innovations in the 2016 event were very successful. The next year's event will be highly focused on forest innovation and on facilitating encounters among forest producers and different kinds of entrepreneurs. Official invitations will be sent shortly together with further information.

139. Commissioner Mason reiterated his interest to have Mexico and the US participate in the twelfth meeting of MegaFlorestais to be held in Vancouver and on Quadra Island, in British Columbia, Canada, on October 15-20, 2017. The meeting will focus on Communities, Commerce, and the Bioeconomy: Innovations to Sustain the World's Forests and is co-hosted by the Canadian Forest Service-Natural Resources Canada, the Rights and Resources Initiative, and the Province of British Columbia.

#### **REGIONAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (COFO), FAO AND THE IRC (Item 8)**

140. The secretariat presented document FO: NAFC/2017/9. The presentation is available on the session's website.

141. Alternate Quiroz proposed an analysis and follow-up to the decisions taken at the 13th meeting of the COP13 of the CBD, as a topic for discussion at the 24th session of COFO, particularly in paragraphs 2 and 49 to 58 of Decision 13/3.

142. In this regard, he recommended to include in the FAO work program the provision of guidance and technical assistance to countries to implement, in accordance with their national circumstances, recommendations for biodiversity mainstreaming in the forest sector, as well as to support capacity building for this purpose, in particular for the implementation of the recommendations in decision 13/3, paragraphs 5 and 17 subparagraph (a), concerning the processes for biodiversity mainstreaming through relevant international processes and promotion of cross-cutting integration, respectively.

143. He also proposed that in the next COFO session should consider formulation of FAO's Biodiversity Strategy and/ or Guidelines for Biodiversity Mainstreaming in the Forest Sector and support to member countries in this regard, requesting FAO to provide relevant guidance and technical assistance. Finally, he reiterated Mexico's interest in maintaining the priorities identified to guide FAO's work as determined at the last NAFC session.

144. Alternate Mezainis said that given that each country is facing longer and more intense fire seasons, the U.S. recommends that FAO focus on fire management and prevention, in particularly focusing on models and training for regional fire capacity building and cooperation. The second area that the US recommends is to focus on urban forestry including an emphasis on youth, in order to connect future leaders to forests and natural resources.

145. With respect to the COFO agenda, Commissioner Mason commented that during the recent COFO Steering Committee meeting, mainstreaming biodiversity was discussed as an overall theme that Canada continues to support, perhaps as one of the topics for the proposed high-level dialogue. A second high-level dialogue could focus on forests and the SDGs under review in 2018. Also with respect to the COFO agenda, he recommended continued discussion on monitoring and reporting. Specifically, COFO could

welcome the global core set of forest-related indicators and encourage FAO to continue to collect data for as many of these indicators as possible. They would then serve as the platform for consistent global reporting and assessment. In support of this effort, FAO should continue to build country capacity for forest reporting.

146. Commissioner Mason suggested that COFO could also request FAO to continue to lead work on defining ‘tricky’ indicators, such as primary forest and forest degradation, so that they can be more easily measured by all countries in a consistent manner. Given that FAO’s core mandate is focused on food security and nutrition, he recommended FAO Forestry to continue to promote the role of forests in food security, which then logically invokes working across sectors as another priority. With respect to additional FAO Forestry priorities, he noted that Canada looks forward to the proposal described in the concept note on evaluating progress against the mandate. In closing he indicated Canada’s support to FAO’s efforts to structure input in ways that require more rigorous analysis of the costs, benefits, and comparative advantages of activities and recommendations for FAO and the Forestry Department as per the template in the annex.

147. The Commission requested the secretariat to translate this guidance to the respective templates and attach to this report as Annex D.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS** (Item 9)

148. Commissioner Mason reaffirmed his position as Commissioner and offered the Chair of the NAFC to the United States for the next term (approx. 2 years). As well, Commissioner Mason reaffirmed Bob Jones’s role as Canada’s Member to the Bureau of Alternates.

149. The following officers were elected by the Commission to hold office till the conclusion of the 30<sup>th</sup> session:

Chairperson: Tom Tooke (United States of America)

First Vice-Chairperson: Mexico requested to postpone the decision till the appointment of the Director General of CONAFOR

Second Vice-Chairperson: Glenn Mason (Canada)

150. Bureau of Alternates positions were reaffirmed as follows:

Val Mezainis (Chairperson) - United States of America

Francisco Quiroz – Mexico

Robert Johnes - Canada

#### **DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING** (Item 10)

151. The United States of America offered to host the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer to host the next meeting.

152. The exact dates and venue of the meeting would be determined in consultation with the host country.

153. The Commission charged the BoA and the secretariat with advising the NAFC on a precise date and location of the 30<sup>th</sup> session.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT** (Item 11)

154. A task team was established with a representative of each country and FAO to draft the session report. The task team was charged with drafting the report following the session for review and eventual adoption by the commissioners.

**CLOSURE OF THE SESSION** (Item 12)

155. Commissioner Mason extended a sincere thank-you to Mexico, the United States, FAO for their cooperation in strengthening the North American Forest Commission both through of the participation in the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the NAFC as well as the accompanying regional workshop on building institutional resiliency and foresight capacity. He also thanked the UNFF secretariat and the International Forestry Student Association for their participation during the session. He congratulated the WGs and Rick Scott, NAFC Liaison for advancing important, relevant thematic regional work. He closed the session by expressing his support for the leadership of Chief Tooke and the U.S Forest Service as they assume the NAFC Chair and reiterated his continued interest to strengthen of the NAFC as a collaborative platform to address the challenges and exciting opportunities that lie ahead.

156. The Commissioners extended their thanks and sincere appreciation to Commissioner Mason, the Government of Canada and the authorities of Alberta and, in particular, Natural Resources Canada – Canadian Forest Service and its staff for their excellent hosting a successful session of NAFC. They warmly thanked Mr Mason for his very able chairing of NAFC during the past two years and during the 29<sup>th</sup> Session.

**Annex 1****NAFC recommendations for the COFO Agenda**

<i>Priority issues for COFO to consider</i>	<i>Expected outcome (information/discussion/decision)</i>	<i>Possible follow up activities for COFO and FAO</i>	<i>RFC</i>
Mainstreaming biodiversity	Discussion/decision		
Forests and the SDGs – input to the 2018 review Highlight the contribution of forests to the 2030 Agenda	Discussion/decision		
MAR - Global Core Set of forest related indicators – FRA and related capacity building/ Global set of C&I	Discussion/decision		
Forests for food security Including agroforestry, NWFPS	Discussion/decision		
Fire management	Discussion/decision		
Urban forestry (special attention to the role of youth)	Discussion/decision		

## Annex 2

### NAFC Recommendations for the FAO programme of work priorities in forestry

<b>NAFC recommendations for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry (related to the agenda of the current session)</b>				
<i>Area/ action for FAO programme of work</i>	<i>Priority (H, M, L, De-emphasis)</i>	<i>Type (new, continued)</i>	<i>Level of action (sub-regional/ regional/global)</i>	<i>Strategic Objective (1-5)</i>
focus on fire management and prevention, in particularly focusing on models and training for regional fire capacity building and cooperation.	High	Continued	Regional/global	2, 3
provide guidance and technical assistance to countries to implement, in accordance with their national circumstances, recommendations for biodiversity mainstreaming in the forest sector, as well as to support capacity building for this purpose,	High	New	Regional/global	1-5
provide relevant guidance and technical assistance to countries in developing a Biodiversity Strategy and/ or Guidelines for Biodiversity Mainstreaming in the Forest Sector.	High	New	Regional/global	1-5
promote the role of forests in food security, which then logically invokes working across sectors	High	Continued	Regional/global	3
lead work on defining 'tricky' indicators, such as primary forest and forest degradation, so that they can be more easily measured by all countries in a consistent manner.	High	Continued	Regional/global	2
continue to build country capacity for forest reporting	High	Continued	Regional/global	2
focus on urban forestry including an emphasis on youth, in order to connect future leaders to forests and natural resources	High	Continued	Regional/global	1, 2, 3

**ANNEX A****AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
  - 1.1 Introduction
  - 1.2 Opening Remarks
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Country Reports
  - 3.1 Mexico
  - 3.2 USA
  - 3.3 Canada
  - 3.4 FAO
4. Report of the Bureau of Alternates
5. Review of the Activities of the Working Groups
  - 5.1 Climate, Atmospheric Change, and Forests Working Group
    - 5.1.1 Integrated Modelling and Assessment of Climate Change Mitigation Options in the Forest Sector (Commission for Environmental Cooperation project): Key outcomes and the way ahead
  - 5.2 Fire Management
  - 5.3 Forest Genetic Resources
  - 5.4 Forest Insects and Diseases and Invasive Plants
  - 5.5 Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment
  - 5.6 Silviculture
  - 5.7 Resiliency (ad hoc)
  - 5.8 Urban Forest Programs (ad hoc)
6. FAO Items
  - 6.1 Global Processes
  - 6.2 The CFS High-level Panel of Experts study on Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition
  - 6.3 A new strategic document for FAO in forestry
  - 6.4 FRA 2020 and efforts for reducing reporting burden by streamlining international forest reporting
7. Forestry Activities / Events of Interest to the Region
8. Regional issues identified by NAFC for COFO, FAO and the IRC
9. Election of Officers
10. Date and place of the next session
11. Adoption of the Report
12. Closing ceremony

**ANNEX B****LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

<b>FO:NAFC/2017/1</b>	Provisional Agenda
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/2</b>	Report on progress in implementing previous decisions
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/3</b>	Report of the Bureau of Alternates
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.1</b>	Report of the Climate, Atmospheric Change, and Forests Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.2</b>	Report of the Fire Management Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.3</b>	Report of the Forest Genetic Resources Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.4</b>	Report of the Forest Insects and Diseases and Invasive Plants Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.5</b>	Report of the Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.6</b>	Report of the Silviculture Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.7</b>	Report of the Resiliency ad hoc Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/4.8</b>	Report of the Urban Forest Programs Working Group
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/5</b>	Outcome of global policy processes of relevance for the Regional Forestry Commissions
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/6</b>	The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition report on Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/7</b>	A New Strategic Document for Forests and Forestry
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/8</b>	Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and efforts for reducing reporting burden by streamlining international forest-related reporting
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/9</b>	Input to FAO Governance
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/Inf.1</b>	Provisional timetable
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/Inf.2</b>	List of Documents
<b>FO:NAFC/2017/Inf.3</b>	Information note for participants

*ANNEX C***MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**

Canada  
Mexico  
United States of America