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United Nations

REPORT

Clark
Freeport
Zone,
Philippines,
22-26
February
2016

**Asia-Pacific
Forestry
Commission**
Twenty-sixth session

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REPORT

of the

TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

of the

ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines

22-26 February 2016

**REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Bangkok, 2016**

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PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session	Bangkok, Thailand	9-17 October 1950
Second session	Singapore/Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1-13 December 1952
Third session	Tokyo, Japan	9-21 April 1955
Fourth session	Bandung, Indonesia	8-12 June 1957
Fifth session	New Delhi, India	12-18 February 1960
Sixth session	Hong Kong	12-17 September 1962
Seventh session	Rotorua, New Zealand	22 September-2 October 1964
Eighth session	Seoul, Korea (Rep. of)	1-8 May 1969
Ninth session	Canberra, Australia	20-28 September 1973
Tenth session	Kathmandu, Nepal	6-10 June 1977
Eleventh session	Suva, Fiji	6-10 April 1981
Twelfth session	Bangkok, Thailand	19-23 March 1984
Thirteenth session	Beijing, China	30 March-3 April 1987
Fourteenth session	Manila, Philippines	12-16 March 1990
Fifteenth session	Colombo, Sri Lanka	9-13 August 1993
Sixteenth session	Yangon, Myanmar	15-20 January 1996
Seventeenth session	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	23-27 February 1998
Eighteenth session	Noosaville, Queensland, Australia	15-19 May 2000
Nineteenth session	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	26-30 August 2002
Twentieth session	Nadi, Fiji	19-23 April 2004
Twenty-first session	Dehradun, India	17-21 April 2006
Twenty-second session	Hanoi, Viet Nam	21-25 April 2008
Twenty-third session	Thimphu, Bhutan	9-11 June 2010
Twenty-fourth session	Beijing, China	7-11 November 2011
Twenty-fifth session	Rotorua, New Zealand	5-8 November 2013

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For the attention of Governments and FAO

The Commission recommended:

- that FAO and member countries facilitate the participation of smallholders and small enterprises in trade and markets;
- that member countries promote and support sustainable use and trade of timber, as well as broader adoption of approaches fostering sustainability and legality of forest products, with particular attention to the needs of small forest enterprises and producers of non-timber forest products;
- that member countries, with the support of FAO, enhance funding and coordination among agencies and sectors to strengthen actions on climate change in support of the elaboration and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions and share results of their efforts during the 27th session of APFC;
- that member countries strengthen local stakeholder rights (noting that rights need to be defined within national contexts), and enabling investment in local institutions and capacities;
- that FAO and member countries continue to implement activities that enhance the roles of key stakeholders including private sector, smallholders, indigenous peoples, communities, civil society organizations and youth in supporting sustainable forest management and forest landscape policies, plans and practices through appropriate policy mechanisms, capacity building and exchange of information and best practices;
- that member countries promote green investment in forests and other natural assets by encouraging dialogue among forest policymakers and financiers in the public and private sectors, with a view to creating an enabling policy environment for green investment;
- that FAO elaborate a regional action plan for forest restoration in Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with member countries and relevant international partners;
- that FAO and member countries to promote greater awareness of the benefits of forests through the International Day of Forests;
- that the Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank support the development and strengthening of holistic national forest policies that encompass cross-cutting multi-sectoral issues;
- that the Asia-Pacific Forest Communication Network provide training in communicating forestry issues to the general public;
- that the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network explore the potential to utilize biomass from invasive species for productive purposes, as one element of the control and management of invasive species.

For the attention of FAO

The Commission recommended:

- continuing technical assistance to countries to meet the requirements of forestry-related NDCs including building capacities, conducting and analysing national forest inventories, and understanding and meeting the requirements of the Transparency Framework;
- that future sessions of APFC engaged with UNFF processes, including issues relating to the implementation of the United Nations Forest Instrument and the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015;

- assisting in identifying appropriate forestry indicators for measuring progress toward SDG implementation;
- continuing support for strengthening sustainable forest management systems for climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- providing information on utilization of trees and forests for floodplain management and protection;
- providing information and technical support relating to best practices in wildfire responses and transboundary fire management;
- providing technical support for rehabilitation of mangrove areas to help restore and stabilize coastal forest ecosystems, establish biodiversity corridors and assist in mitigating the impacts of tsunami, typhoons and storm surges;
- finalizing a regional strategy and action plan on forests and natural disasters including giving specific attention to vulnerability mapping;
- exploring modalities for supporting integration of community forestry producers and smallholders into market and trading systems for forest products;
- supporting sharing of experiences and lessons for community forestry from regions beyond Asia and the Pacific;
- continuing to provide technical support for forest landscape restoration including restoring ecosystem services and enhancing biodiversity conservation;
- strengthening capacity for national and local forest inventories, including monitoring, reporting and verification in support of REDD+ programmes;
- supporting assessment of bamboo, rattan and other non-timber forest resources in the Global Forest Resources Assessment and other relevant reporting processes;
- continuing, in partnership with other relevant organizations, support for a broad range of activities to build REDD+ readiness including compiling a publication on experiences and lessons learned from the wide variety of REDD+ activities being implemented in the region;
- convening a cross-sectoral workshop to share and explore perspectives on green investment and other public-private partnerships;
- assisting member countries in accessing funds for forest restoration through the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and similar avenues;
- providing technical support to forest restoration activities in Asia and the Pacific, including through the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism;
- continuing support for innovative youth programmes such as Kids-to-Forests.

INTRODUCTION

1. At the invitation of the Government of Philippines, the twenty-sixth session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) was held in Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga, Philippines, from 22 to 26 February 2016. Delegates from 28 member countries and one United Nations organization participated in the session, along with observers and representatives from 22 regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. A list of participants is given in *Appendix B*.

Opening ceremony

2. The opening ceremony featured addresses by the Undersecretary for Field Operations, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Philippines and the FAO Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division.

3. Mr. Demetrio Ignacio Jr., Undersecretary for Field Operations, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, welcomed participants to the Philippines. He noted the importance of recent decisions emerging from global policy processes for forestry, including the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and negotiations at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He noted significant achievements in Philippines' forestry in recent times include major reductions in the incidence of illegal logging, globally significant increases in forest cover and ambitious goals for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

4. Ms. Eva Muller, FAO Director of the Forestry Policy and Resources Division welcomed participants on behalf of the FAO Assistant Director-General for Forestry. She commended the APFC Executive Committee for setting an agenda for its twenty-sixth session, which is fully responsive to global challenges while maintaining a strong regional focus. She noted additional milestone agreements and events during 2015 included adoption of the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015 during the 11th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF); the Durban Declaration – 2050 vision for forests and forestry arising from the XIV World Forestry Congress; and approval of the FAO reviewed Strategic Framework at the 39th session of the FAO Conference.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA (Item 1)

5. Under the guidance of Ms. Anna Tyler (New Zealand), on behalf of the outgoing Chair of the Commission, the provisional agenda (FO:APFC/2016/1) was reviewed and adopted (see *Appendix A*). Documents considered by the Commission are listed in *Appendix C*.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 2)

6. The Commission unanimously elected the following individuals to hold office until the commencement of the twenty-seventh session:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| i. Chairperson: | Marcial Amaro Jr. (Philippines) |
| ii. Vice-Chairpersons: | Tungalag Majig (Mongolia)
Anura Sathurusinghe (Sri Lanka)
Goodwill Amos (Papua New Guinea) |
| iii. Rapporteur: | Sapol Boonsermsuk (Thailand) |

Mr. Patrick Durst (FAO) served as Secretary of the Commission.

BEYOND PARIS: WHAT NEXT FOR FORESTS AND FORESTRY IN ASIA-PACIFIC? (Item 3)

7. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/2, the Commission considered the outcomes of the 21st Conference of the Parties (CoP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

8. The Commission:

- a. emphasized its strong commitment to achieving the aims of the Paris Agreement;
- b. recognized that forests and forestry will be major contributors in meeting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in many countries;
- c. acknowledged that ambitious goals set for forestry contributions pose significant challenges for many countries;
- d. requested that FAO continue to provide technical assistance to countries to meet the requirements of forestry-related NDCs including building capacities, conducting and analysing national forest inventories, and understanding and meeting the requirements of the Transparency Framework.

GLOBAL POLICY PROCESSES (Item 4)

9. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/11, the Commission considered major outcomes of global policy processes with strong relevance to forestry.

10. The Commission:

- a. emphasized that decisions emerging from global policy processes in 2015 are of decisive importance to global forest governance and to sustainable forest management at country level;
- b. highlighted that various strands of global policy processes relating to forests require harmonization within countries' national forest programmes;
- c. noted that forestry needs to be mainstreamed into broader national policy and planning processes;
- d. supported a suggestion that future sessions of APFC engaged with UNFF processes, including issues relating to the implementation of the United Nations Forest Instrument and the International Arrangement on Forests beyond 2015;
- e. requested that FAO assist in identifying appropriate forestry indicators for measuring progress toward SDG implementation;
- f. urged FAO to continue to support strengthening sustainable forest management systems for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

OUTCOMES OF THE XIV WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS (Item 5)

11. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/12, the Commission considered outcomes of the XIV World Forestry Congress.

12. The Commission:

- a. commended the Durban Declaration – 2050 vision for forests and forestry;
- b. highlighted the opportunity afforded by the International Day of Forests to promote key messages arising from the World Forestry Congress;

- c. acknowledged and welcomed the interest of the Republic of Korea in hosting the XV World Forestry Congress in 2021.

FORESTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS (Item 6)

13. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/4, the Commission considered needs and priorities in relation to utilizing trees and forests to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters.

14. The Commission:

- a. highlighted the value in sharing experiences in managing forests to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters including reducing forest fuel loads, establishing national forest fire monitoring systems and participatory approaches in establishing protective forests;
- b. recognized that while trees and forests have significant roles in mitigating the impacts of natural disasters, they also have clear limitations in the degree of protection they can afford;
- c. urged FAO to provide information on utilization of trees and forests for floodplain management and protection;
- d. requested that FAO provide information and technical support relating to best practices in wildfire responses and transboundary fire management;
- e. urged FAO to provide technical support for rehabilitation of mangrove areas to help restore and stabilize coastal forest ecosystems, establish biodiversity corridors and assist in mitigating the impacts of tsunamis, typhoons and storm surges;
- f. requested that FAO finalize a regional strategy and action plan on forests and natural disasters including giving specific attention to vulnerability mapping.

BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR COMMUNITY BASED FORESTRY AND FOREST FARM PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS (Item 7)

15. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/5, the Commission considered the importance of community-based forestry and forest and farm producer organizations in achieving food security, responding to climate change, conserving biodiversity and reducing poverty.

16. The Commission:

- a. highlighted that community-based forestry is a vital tool in managing and improving the condition of forests in the region, as well as an important vehicle for alleviating poverty;
- b. acknowledged that many challenges to the effectiveness of community-based forestry remain evident, including security of tenure, linkages to forest products markets, allocation of rights to utilize forest resources, access to technical knowledge, and illegal logging and harvesting;
- c. recognized that while the Durban Declaration “We know the forests and the forests know us” declaration gives voice to smallholders, local communities and indigenous people, the declaration will have little impact unless countries actively support its provisions;
- d. requested that FAO explore modalities for supporting integration of community forestry producers and smallholders into market and trading systems for forest products;
- e. requested that FAO support sharing of experiences and lessons for community forestry from regions beyond Asia and the Pacific.

GENDER POLICIES, YOUTH AND FORESTRY EDUCATION (Item 8)

17. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/6, the Commission exchanged perspectives on gender policies, youth and forestry education.

18. The Commission:

- a. highlighted the importance of increasing the participation of women and youth in forestry and mainstreaming gender and youth into forest policies;
- b. emphasized the need to make forestry education relevant, dynamic and integrated with key global issues;
- c. endorsed the importance of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism in strengthening forestry education and its capacity to meet rapidly evolving societal needs.

STATE OF FORESTRY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION (Item 9)

19. Based on Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/7, the Commission considered the state of forestry in the Asia-Pacific region.

20. The Commission:

- a. highlighted the challenges of smallholders and small enterprises in relation to compliance costs and barriers to entry, including requirements relating to timber legality and certification;
- b. highlighted the importance of reforestation and forest restoration using a variety of recognized techniques including forest landscape restoration and assisted natural regeneration, with emphasis on the quality of the restoration achieved;
- c. noted the importance of careful analysis to correctly identify direct and underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation;
- d. recognized the value of sharing experiences and lessons learned on a wide variety of forest-related topics including devolution of forest management, invasive species, and climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- e. requested that FAO and member countries facilitate the participation of smallholders and small enterprises in trade and markets;
- f. requested that FAO continue to provide technical support to forest landscape restoration including restoring ecosystem services and enhancing biodiversity conservation;
- g. requested that FAO provide support to strengthening capacity for national and local forest inventories, including monitoring, reporting and verification in support of REDD+ programmes.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT (Item 10)

21. In conjunction with Item 9 and on the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/8, the Commission considered the process and findings of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2015.

22. The Commission:

- a. appreciated the importance and value of the Global Forest Resources Assessment as a primary source of global, regional and national data on forests;
- b. noted the importance of collecting forest data at subnational and local levels to enhance ground-level forest management capacities;

- c. underlined the need for capacity building, technology transfer, sharing of best practices, and international collaboration on forest resources assessment and monitoring and national forest inventories, including remote sensing technologies;
- d. requested that FAO continue supporting assessment of bamboo, rattan and other non-timber forest resources in the Global Forest Resources Assessment and other relevant reporting processes.

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING APFC- AND FAO-SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION (Item 11)

23. Based on Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/9 and with reference to Secretariat Notes FO:APFC/2016/13; FO:APFC/2016/14; and FO:APFC/2016/15, the Commission reviewed progress in implementing APFC- and FAO-supported activities in the region.

24. The Commission:

- a. commended the range of activities being implemented in the region and noted the importance of activities being linked to priorities identified in FAO's strategic framework;
- b. welcomed efforts to engage youth in forestry activities, including the Kids-to-Forests programme;
- c. endorsed the value of the post-CoP meetings and encouraged FAO to explore expanding the scope of these to include exploring areas of potential collaboration among countries;
- d. requested that FAO in partnership with other relevant organizations continue to support a broad range of activities to build REDD+ readiness including compiling a publication on experiences and lessons learned from the wide variety of REDD+ activities being implemented in the region.

GROWING OUR FUTURE: REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY WEEK 2016 STREAMS (Item 12)

25. Based on Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/10 and presentations from each of the five thematic streams of Asia-Pacific Forestry Week 2016, the Commission considered issues, challenges and opportunities in relation to:

- Stream 1: Pathways to prosperity: future trade and markets;
- Stream 2: Tackling climate change: challenges and opportunities;
- Stream 3: Serving society: forestry and people;
- Stream 4: New institutions, new governance;
- Stream 5: Our green future: green investment and growing our natural assets.

26. The Commission:

- a. noting the diverse needs and responsibilities of consumer, producer and processing countries;
- b. recommended that member countries promote and support sustainable use and trade of timber, as well as broader adoption of approaches fostering sustainability and legality of forest products, with particular attention to the needs of small forest enterprises and producers of non-timber forest products;
- c. recommended that member countries, with the support of FAO, enhance funding and coordination among agencies and sectors to strengthen actions on climate change in support of

the elaboration and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions and share results of their efforts during the 27th session of APFC;

- d. recommended that member countries strengthen local stakeholder rights (noting that rights need to be defined within national contexts), and enabling investment in local institutions and capacities;
- e. recommended that FAO and member countries continue to implement activities that enhance the roles of key stakeholders including private sector, smallholders, indigenous peoples, communities, civil society organizations and youth in supporting sustainable forest management and forest landscape policies, plans and practices through appropriate policy mechanisms, capacity building and exchange of information and best practices;
- f. recommended that member countries promote green investment in forests and other natural assets by encouraging dialogue among forest policymakers and financiers in the public and private sectors, with a view to creating an enabling policy environment for green investment;
- g. requested that FAO convene a cross-sectoral workshop to share and explore perspectives on green investment and other public-private partnerships.

FOREST AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION (Item 13)

27. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/14 and outcomes shared from the “High-level regional consultation to develop an action plan for forest and landscape restoration in Asia-Pacific” the Commission considered progress, challenges and opportunities in relation to forest and landscape restoration.

28. The Commission:

- a. highlighted that very high priority should be accorded to forest restoration activities in Asia and the Pacific;
- b. recognized that devolution of forest restoration responsibilities to subnational and local levels creates both challenges and opportunities;
- c. recognized that responsibilities for degraded land restoration are often mandated to government agencies outside the forestry sector;
- d. recognized the importance of correctly identifying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation to ensure these processes are curtailed;
- e. appreciated that translating forest restoration results and techniques from pilot projects to large-scale implementation involves significant additional complexities;
- f. appreciated the large number of organizations and initiatives working on forest and landscape restoration in the region and noted the importance of cooperation in various activities including exchanging information, sharing best practices, creating enabling environments and accessing financing to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication;
- g. requested FAO to continue assisting member countries in accessing funds for forest restoration through the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and similar avenues;
- h. requested that FAO continue to provide technical support to forest restoration activities in Asia and the Pacific, including through the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism;
- i. recommended that FAO elaborate a regional action plan for forest restoration in Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with member countries and relevant international partners.

INPUTS TO FAO GOVERNANCE (Item 14)

29. Secretariat Note FO:APFC/2016/16 provided guidance to the Commission in identifying priority issues for consideration by the Committee on Forestry (COFO), for the attention of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, and for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry.

30. The Commission identified recommendations for the attention of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. These included recommendations relating to: (i) identifying indicators for measuring progress toward Sustainable Development Goal implementation; and (ii) mobilizing resources for strengthening action on climate change to support the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions.

31. The Commission proposed topics for the agenda of the 23rd session of COFO including several relating to: (i) the Sustainable Development Goals; (ii) forestry's contributions in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation challenges; (iii) youth and education; (iv) roles of trees and forests in mitigating the impacts of natural disasters.

32. Priorities for the FAO Programme of Work in Forestry identified by the Commission included several relating to: (i) the Sustainable Development Goals; (ii) climate change; (iii) forest and landscape restoration; (iv) coordination with UNFF; (v) gender and youth.

33. The Commission noted that the APFC Chairman and the Secretary would work to identify other recommendations from the proceedings of the 26th session for the attention of COFO, the Regional Conference and the Programme of Work in Forestry, as appropriate.

OTHER BUSINESS (Item 15)

34. The Commission was informed of activities implemented by four of its working groups:

- Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN), including capacity building in pest management and voluntary guidelines for the development and implementation of a biosecurity plan for planted and natural forests;
- Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank (APFPTT);
- Asia-Pacific Forest Communication Network (APFCN) including preparations for the International Day of Forests 2016;
- Kids-to-Forests (K2F) initiative.

35. The Commission:

- a. encouraged the Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank to support the development and strengthening of holistic national forest policies that encompass cross-cutting multi-sectoral issues;
- b. encouraged the Asia-Pacific Forest Communication Network to provide training in communicating forestry issues to the general public;
- c. encouraged the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network to explore the potential to utilize biomass from invasive species for productive purposes, as one element of the control and management of invasive species;
- d. recognized the importance of relevant legislation and regulation to address the challenges of invasive species;
- e. encouraged FAO to continue supporting innovative youth programmes such as Kids-to-Forests;
- f. urged FAO and member countries to promote greater awareness of the benefits of forests through the International Day of Forests.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Item 16)

36. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer of the delegation from Sri Lanka to host its twenty-seventh session. The delegation from the Republic of Korea indicated its interest in hosting the subsequent session of the Commission and the fourth Asia-Pacific Forestry Week.

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Election of officers
3. Beyond Paris: What next for forests and forestry in Asia-Pacific?
4. Global policy processes
5. Outcomes of the XIV World Forestry Congress
6. Forests and natural disasters
7. Building momentum for community based forestry and forest farm producer organizations
8. Gender policies, youth and forestry education
9. State of forestry in the Asia-Pacific region
10. Regional analysis of the Global Forest Resources Assessment
11. Progress in implementing APFC- and FAO-supported activities in the region
 - Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and
 - Development of Forest Genetic Resources
 - SFM Toolbox
 - Progress report on the Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring
12. Growing our future: reports and recommendations from Asia-Pacific Forestry Week 2016 Streams
 - Pathways to prosperity: Future trade and markets
 - Tackling climate change: challenges and opportunities
 - Serving society: forestry and people
 - New institutions, new governance
 - Our green future: green investment and growing our natural assets
13. Forest and landscape restoration
14. Inputs to FAO governance
15. Other business
 - Report of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN)

- Report of the Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank (APFPTT)
- Report of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Communicators Network (APFCN)
- Report of the Kids to Forests (K2F) initiative
- International Day of Forests 2016

16. Date and place of the next session

17. Adoption of the report

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Rapporteur:	Sapol Boonsermsuk (Thailand)
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FO:APFC/2016/INF.1	Information note
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