



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

E

# COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

## TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Rome, Italy, 23-27 June 2014

## THE ZERO HUNGER CHALLENGE

### I. BACKGROUND

1. The concern about continuing hunger and mal-nutrition in the world has placed food security and nutrition back on the global and regional political agenda as an estimated 842 million people are undernourished globally, a majority of whom – 827 million – live in developing countries. These are people with no means to produce sufficient food for themselves or to earn enough income with which to purchase food.
2. With the world population projected to rise to more than nine billion by 2050, FAO estimates that overall global agricultural output needs to expand by about 60 per cent over 2005/2007 levels to meet global food requirements. This may translate into putting new land into cultivation, consequently increasing pressure on existing natural resources, including forests and rangelands.
3. To address the above concerns, the UN Secretary-General launched a Zero Hunger Challenge at the Rio+20 summit on sustainable development in Brazil, 2012. This vision is aimed at eliminating hunger and contributing to better nutrition globally. It is grounded in five pillars, namely:
  - **ensuring** universal access to nutritious food for children below 2 years;
  - **enabling** all people to access the food they need at all times;
  - **ensuring** that all food systems are sustainable;
  - **reducing** rural poverty and improving wellbeing through increasing smallholder productivity and income;
  - **minimizing** food losses during storage and transport, and waste of food by retailers and consumers.
4. In May 2013, FAO organized the International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition, the main outcomes of which were presented to and discussed by all Regional Forestry Commissions. This paper is a reflection of the recommendations from the international conference and from the Regional Forestry Commissions on ways to increase the contributions forests and trees outside forests<sup>1</sup> can make to addressing the Zero Hunger Challenge.
5. FAO has started implementation of its new Strategic Framework, which follows a cross-cutting and inter-disciplinary approach. It provides an opportunity to support national food security and nutrition strategies in a manner that takes into consideration the contributions of various sectors,

<sup>1</sup> The term “trees outside forests” encompasses agroforestry systems, other trees on farms, and trees in non-forested rural landscapes

including forestry. Work plans include Regional Initiatives on the Zero Hunger Challenge in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa.

## II. CONTRIBUTIONS OF FORESTS AND TREES OUTSIDE FORESTS TO ADDRESSING THE ZERO HUNGER CHALLENGE

6. Forests and trees outside forests contribute to food security, nutrition and livelihoods in several ways, including as a direct source of food, fuel, employment and cash income. They are fundamental to the survival of forest-dwellers through the ecosystem services they provide, including: maintaining or restoring soil fertility; protecting watersheds and water courses; providing fodder to livestock; conserving biodiversity; and helping to mitigate climate change.

7. Forests and trees outside forests can contribute to all five pillars of the Zero Hunger Challenge:

- a) ***Access to nutritious food*** - Forests and trees directly contribute to food security and nutrition by providing a variety of highly nutritious forest foods and tree products. These are important sources of vitamins, iron, and other micro-nutrients important for a healthy diet. In addition, fuelwood is used for cooking food by 2.4 billion people worldwide.
- b) ***Enabling all people to access the food they need at all times*** - For most of the year, forest dependent people and herders in arid lands depend on forest and tree products for their food needs (and so does their livestock), and for a wide range of medicinal plants that contribute to their health and well-being. People also revert to wild food from the forests during periods when food supplies are low, for example at the end of the dry season. Security of land and forest tenure, and more equitable access to resources for the rural poor and women is therefore a key factor in contributing to their food security and nutrition.
- c) ***Ensuring that all food systems are sustainable*** - Forests and trees outside forests increase ecosystem resilience and hence capacities of people to meet their nutritional needs. These ecosystem services make important contributions to stabilising and supporting agricultural production systems; providing important genetic material for crops and livestock; absorbing carbon dioxide and storing carbon. Additionally mangrove forests protect coastal and riverine fisheries.
- d) ***Reducing rural poverty and improving wellbeing through increasing smallholder productivity and income*** – Forests and agroforestry systems, including agro-sylvo-pastoral systems, provide products and services through which local populations, particularly women raise incomes. In many countries, harvesting, processing and marketing of a wide range of forest products, such as medicines, wild foods or fuelwood is a vital element of rural economies.
- e) ***Minimizing food losses*** – *Forest and tree foods are available most of the year, and particularly in times of food scarcity.* Indigenous peoples and local communities hold an immense wealth of traditional knowledge on the harvesting, handling and preparation of forest foods and tree products. Augmenting traditional with scientific knowledge, provides great opportunities in preservation of foods from forests and trees.

## III. MAIN ISSUES

8. In many countries national food security and nutrition strategies do not take into account the range of contributions made by forests and trees outside forests to food security and nutrition. This is mainly because of lack of knowledge and data to support decisions-making and investment in non-wood forest products (NWFPs), wildlife and forest ecosystem services for food security and nutrition. Mechanisms at international level would be needed to guide countries in the collection, analysis,

reporting and dissemination of data on the use of NWFPs as well as, wildlife and forest ecosystem services important for food security and nutrition.

9. Given that food security and nutrition are multi-dimensional, there is a need to take into consideration the contributing roles of a range of sectors including, agriculture, fisheries, livestock. In many countries, there are inconsistencies, fragmentation, and contradictions in sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and programmes related to food security and nutrition.

10. Overharvesting of tree products and forest foods, including wild meat, is a serious issue in some countries. Coupled with poorly implemented land-use actions associated with, for example, unsustainable logging, mining and agriculture, overharvesting can have cumulative effects that cause the impoverishment of land and further marginalisation of local communities.

11. Women often have specialized knowledge of forests and trees in terms of their species diversity, uses for various purposes, and management and conservation. However, the role of women in forestry value chains is often poorly supported by policy makers and service providers. Supporting the development of female-owned small forest based enterprises creates income generation opportunities that contribute to food security.

#### **IV. THE WAY FORWARD**

12. The participants at the International Conference on Forests for Food Security and Nutrition and the delegates of the Regional Forest Commissions made the following recommendations on ways to strengthen forests' contributions to addressing the Zero Hunger Challenge:

- a) An integrated, cross-sectoral approach to food security and nutrition is needed whereby relevant sectoral policies and programmes (including those on agriculture, forests, wildlife, food security and nutrition) are harmonised and better coordinated at the national level.
- b) Collaborating nationally and internationally to improve data collection, analysis, reporting and monitoring of NWFPs, forest ecosystem services, forest wildlife and other forest-related aspects of food security and nutrition will provide the evidence needed for policy decision making.
- c) Improving the security of tenure of land and forest resources for indigenous peoples, other local communities and marginalized people is important for realizing food security and nutrition objectives.
- d) Strengthening rural community-based institutions will improve access to knowledge, finance, markets, better prices and technologies for local people. This involves supporting the development of entrepreneurial, financial and planning skills among small scale forest producers and maximize the income they receive from market oriented activities in forestry and agroforestry.
- e) Agricultural production can be expanded without the loss or degradation of forests. Supporting efforts and investments in agroforestry will contribute to increased land productivity and better crop yields. In addition, the restoration of degraded forest lands will help alleviate the impacts of forest conversion on food security and nutrition.

#### **V. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

13. The Committee may wish to invite countries to:

- develop evidence-based and inclusive forest policies that take into account the role of forests for food security and nutrition;

- strengthen their response to the Zero Hunger Challenge by putting in place integrated, cross-sectoral approaches that take into consideration the role of forests and trees in national food security and nutrition strategies and programmes;
- strengthen rights of access to, and management of, forest resources by forest-dependent and local communities by applying the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security;
- manage forest ecosystems, rangelands and wildlife habitats sustainably and adopt practices that will enhance the resilience of food-production systems in the face of changing ecological, economic, social or political conditions;
- promote policies that increase productivity of small-holders to fully tap the potential of forests and trees outside forests and hence improve their incomes, food security and nutrition.

14. The Committee may wish to recommend that FAO, in the context of its new strategic framework, initiates actions to upscale its capacities for monitoring the contribution of forests to addressing the Zero Hunger Challenge at regional and global level, and to further support countries in:

- increasing understanding and knowledge of how forests and trees can address the Zero Hunger Challenge through adopting more inclusive, cross-sectoral national policies and facilitating the sharing of experiences in upcoming global forums including Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), Milan Expo 2015, World Parks Congress 2014 and the World Forestry Congress 2015;
- promoting an appropriate balance between forest conservation, sustainable supply and expansion of agricultural lands, taking into consideration the vital contribution that forests and wildlife make in addressing the Zero Hunger Challenge;
- developing mechanisms to improve data collection, monitoring and reporting related to the role of forests in food security and nutrition;
- strengthening the capacity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based forest policies, investments and programmes that take into consideration the role of forests in addressing the Zero Hunger Challenge.