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منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

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STRENGTHENING THE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN FAO GLOBAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Strategic Evaluation of FAO's role and work in Forestry recommended that *"FAO senior management should lay the groundwork for greater and more effective interaction and collaboration between the various statutory/advisory bodies of FAO that will contribute to strategic priority setting. Specifically, FAO should develop a more effective interaction and collaboration between COFO and COAG, for example by (i) FO and AG preparing a joint briefing paper on the challenges and opportunities; and (ii) establishing a joint COAG-COFO Panel of Experts that would advise both committees on the strategic priorities for key cross-sectoral activities that would need to be jointly addressed by FAO departments."* The Management Response to the findings of the Strategic Evaluation suggested to address this recommendation through a more active coordination of agendas between statutory bodies responsible for management of natural resources.

2. At its 21st session COFO considered cross sectoral collaboration from multiple angles. In discussing the outcome of Rio+20, the Committee recommended that FAO support countries in *"highlighting ways in which forestry and agriculture linkages can be strengthened across sectors and amongst land management policies and agencies to improve food security¹".* With regard to strengthening forestry's cross-sectoral linkages the Committee recommended that countries be supported in *"promote the sustainable management of forests and trees in an integrated approach across the landscape and their integration into agriculture and other land use systems, where appropriate²".* With particular attention to the main findings of the Strategic Evaluation COFO recommended FAO to *"explore greater cooperation between the Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, such as a joint COAG-COFO Panel of Experts"* and *"report back to COFO at its next session in 2014 on measures and actions taken³".*

3. Document COFO 2014/6 presents a full account of actions taken to implement the above recommendations. In addition, the new Strategic Framework proved to be very instrumental in using the Strategic Objectives as the backbone of cross-sectoral collaboration in the Programme of Work

¹ COFO 2012/REP pp 18

² COFO 2012/REP pp 30

³ COFO 2012/REP pp 58

and Budget for the 2014-15 biennium and beyond. Document COFO/2014/7.1 provides further details in this regard.

4. Particular measures were taken to initiate stronger collaboration among relevant governing bodies. The secretaries of the three Committees met to discuss possible ways forward and noted the need for presenting a proposal for the consideration of the respective bureaux and the governing bodies themselves. It was noted that COFO's call for cooperation with other technical committees need to be brought to their attention for appropriate response, in order to provide a mandate for the relevant departments for further actions.

5. In discussing the implementation of the recommendations of the last session of COFO the Steering Committee requested the secretariat to develop, in collaboration with the relevant departments, a concept note for such a process and present it in due time for the consideration of the respective bureaux so that decision could be taken to include this issue in the agenda of the forthcoming sessions.

II. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

6. There are ample opportunities to deliver on these recommendations within the new Strategic Framework of FAO. While the Strategic Objectives 1-5 are meant to ensure that good coordination is taking place on the level of implementation, it is important that similar coordination is initiated among the statutory bodies concerned, within the framework of Strategic Objectives 6.

7. It was noted in prior coordination meetings that progress could be best achieved if COFO's recommendation for collaboration were reciprocated by the technical committees concerned. In order to achieve this facilitate such a coordination, Technical Committees could be invited to:

- consider the implementation of COFO's recommendation in the light of the already existing guidance arising from their prior decisions;
- explore opportunities for establishing a similar mandate across the committees;
- identify items of joint interest and concern (see Annex I: Background information on possible joint areas of interest for COFI, COFO, COAG);
- consider appropriate delivery mechanisms for implementing a possible mandate including through strengthening collaboration within the Strategic Framework (each SOs) and developing concrete recommendations to be channelled to the PWB for the 2016-2017 biennium;
- identify opportunities for addressing common items or issues of joint concern at forthcoming sessions of the Committees and in the inter-sessional periods;
- consider establishing joint mechanisms such as working groups or panels of experts;
- give guidance for collaboration in the current biennium by identifying areas of emphasis in the current PWB;
- recommend ways to address the issue at the Committees' forthcoming sessions.

8. In order to facilitate the Committees' considerations, the secretariat will:

- prepare a comprehensive review of past and ongoing cooperation and joint initiatives;
- consult with the respective strategic teams on the representation of the themes of common interest in the Strategic Objectives;
- propose a time-table/draft roadmap for the future process of cooperation between COFI, COFO and COAG.

III. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

9. The Committee may wish to:

- encourage countries to strengthen collaboration of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and other land use sectors to promote the application of integrated approaches across the landscape;

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- invite in particular the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Fisheries to explore opportunities for collaboration with the Committee and give corresponding guidance to their secretariats with a view to addressing key issues identified in paragraph 7;
 - invite these committees to consider the establishment of technical subsidiary bodies as appropriate.
10. The Committee may wish to request FAO to:
- continue promoting cross sectoral collaboration within the framework of the Strategic Objectives;
 - elaborate, in consultation with the respective bureaux, a detailed proposal for collaboration, for the consideration of the technical committees in their forthcoming sessions;
 - report on progress at the 23rd session of the Committee.

Annex**Background information on possible joint areas of interest for COFI and COFO**

1. Opportunities for enhanced coordination with Fisheries programme are arising on two strategic areas: coastal ecosystems as an interface between marine and terrestrial ecosystems; and water and watershed management in a broader landscape. Concrete proposals are derived from, but not restricted to, the recent Global Blue Economy Initiative document and could include:

- Mangroves, representing to borderline between marine and terrestrial ecosystems offer ample opportunities for cooperation in:
 - climate change mitigation, representing a major carbon sink;
 - biodiversity protection as an important gene pool and a breeding ground for fisheries;
 - coastal protection against natural disasters as well as erosion;
 - tourism and recreational fishing.
- Integration of aquaculture with other natural resource management activities in the landscape would allow cooperation in:
 - developing the knowledge base for landscape level planning;
 - improving integrated watershed management practices involving agriculture, forestry water management and fisheries;
 - supporting the development of enabling policies, legislative and institutional frameworks and financial mechanisms.

Background information on possible joint areas of interest for COAG and COFO

2. Agriculture and forestry each represent about 30 percent of the world's land area, often practised on adjacent areas and with a permanent flux between them. In the absence of cross-sectoral coordination processes one sector could easily work to the detriment of the other creating conflicts rather than mobilizing or boosting synergies. The 20th session of COFO, recalling also the discussion at the 22nd session of COAG, called for closer cooperation of the two bodies all relevant areas, including agro-forestry, soil and water.

3. Cooperation between forestry and agriculture could be intensified in:

- integrating sustainable forest management with agriculture and other land use systems on the landscape level;
- achieving food security, rural poverty eradication, climate change adaptation and mitigation, conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources through integrated approaches;
- combating desertification and land degradation and addressing underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation;
- promoting agroforestry as a means of:
 - increasing and diversify overall production of wood and non-wood components of the rural production system, while bringing added environmental benefits and enhancing ecosystem viability and resilience;
 - contributing to climate-smart agriculture.