



LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

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Update on global and regional initiatives and processes of relevance for the Commission

Executive Summary

This paper provides an overview of key global developments of relevance to forests and the forest sector and of interest to the Commission, notably:

- a. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;
- b. The 18th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests;
- c. The 27th and 28th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- d. The Outcomes of the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- e. The 2025 edition of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessments;
- f. The next edition of *the State of World's forest Report SOFO 2024*;
- g. The 2nd World Forum on Urban Forests.
- h. The Latin American Network for Technical Cooperation in National Parks, Other Protected Areas, Wild Flora and Fauna (REDPARQUES)
- i. The Latin American and Caribbean national forest inventory network

Suggested action by the Commission

The Commission is invited to take note of the global processes and initiatives, and provide guidance, as deemed appropriate.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Forests are affected by multiple crises and are increasingly seen as key elements of any solution for global developmental and environmental challenges, hence they constitute an integral part of many global agendas.
2. This paper provides an overview of key global developments of relevance to forests and the forest sector and of interest to the Commission, notably:
 - (a) The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;
 - (b) The 18th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests;
 - (c) The 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
 - (d) The Outcomes of the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - (e) The 2025 edition of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessments;
 - (f) The next edition of *the State of World's forest Report SOFO 2024*;
 - (g) The 2nd World Forum on Urban Forests.

I. KEY DEVELOPMENTS OF GLOBAL PROCESSES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FORESTRY

A. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

3. The UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), through resolution A/RES/73/284 on 1 March 2019, with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of effective ecosystem restoration. The UN Decade was formally launched on the World Environment Day (5 June) in 2021.
4. FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) are co-leading the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Rio conventions, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Global Landscapes Forum, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and other key partners.
5. FAO takes an active role in framing a vision for the implementation of the Decade to make agricultural systems (crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) more productive, efficient, resilient and sustainable, while managing and protecting the environment and the natural resources base that these systems depend upon. For these systems, the primary objective of the Decade should be to restore them to the full productive capacity of their goods and services.
6. Partnership is a cornerstone of the UN Decade. As of February 2023, the Decade's network of partners included over 100 organizations. Furthermore, five task forces were established: (i) Monitoring, (ii) Best Practices, (iii) Finance, (iv) Science; and (v) Youth.
7. The Monitoring Task Force, led by FAO, supports the development of the Framework for Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring (FERM) for the transparent monitoring and reporting on the progress in restoration throughout the duration of the Decade by providing monitoring tools & geospatial information related to ecosystems. The FERM registry was launched in May 2022 in Seoul

at the XV World Forestry Congress to harmonize and collect information on ecosystem restoration projects and programmes.

8. The Task Force on Best Practices, also led by FAO, is focused on shaping the knowledge component of the Decade, including capacity development efforts, development of Standards of practices as well as capitalization, sharing and dissemination of good practices for restoration in all ecosystems.

9. A UN Decade's Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was created in 2021 by FAO and UNEP with the ambition to raise 100 million USD by 2030 to support the implementation of the UN Decade Strategy and its flagships and with Germany and Denmark being the first two donors of the Fund.

10. In January 2022, the UN Decade launched the first call for countries to nominate their World Restoration Flagships, receiving 154 Expressions of Interest and 73 government-endorsed proposals. FAO supported the assessment of the submitted flagships through the work of the Best Practices Task Force, which in collaboration with the Science Task Force, coordinated and develop the evaluation process building on the guiding principles for ecosystem restoration of the UN Decade. All submission had been reviewed and the final first ten approved flagships were announced on 13th of December 2022 during the Restoration Day at the UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal, Canada.

11. From 2022 onwards, the invitation for nominations will be repeated each year. New Flagship Initiatives will be selected, seeking to ensure diversity of ecosystems and balance at global scale. Any proposal for a Flagship Initiative by a non-state actor will require endorsement by the government(s) of the country(ies) that the Flagships target.

12. Restoring productive ecosystems is a major element in implementing the FAO Strategic Framework and contributes to and supports all four betters creating a basis for contributing to the achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (including SDG 2, 13, 14, 15 and 17), and advancement of FAO's work within several Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). In addition, ecosystem restoration is directly linked with major FAO strategies, including the Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, the Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and the Science and Innovation Strategy.

13. FAO developed a proposed Value-Addition Impact Area Initiative (VAIA) under *the Better Environment – Restoring Environment for Productive Agriculture, Investment and Resilience (REPAIR)*, aimed to step up large-scale land restoration for small-scaling farming, across different production systems (agroforestry, forestry, pastoral, mangroves, coastal) in Africa and Central America.

14. Concurrently, FAO is supporting existing efforts on forest and landscape restoration through its Trust Fund programme: The Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism (FLRM), which aims at providing technical assistance for country-level implementation.

B. The 18th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

15. The 18th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was held on 8-12 May 2023. This was the first full in-person meeting of the Forum since 2019 – a break in physical meetings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

16. Being a technical session, UNFF18's main focus was the discussion on the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF):

- thematic priorities for the 2023-24 biennium;
- contribution of Members to implementing the UNSPF;

- interlinkages between the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2023;
- implementation of the communication and outreach strategy; means of implementation;
- monitoring, assessment and reporting; and
- update on the preparations of the 2024 midterm review of the international arrangement on forests (IAF).

17. The session also considered emerging issues including forest fires, climate change challenges, wood fuel/energy, and forest financing.

18. Arising from the deliberations of the Forum, the following topics were identified as crucial for further progress and for further considerations by the 19th session of UNFF in 2024, which, as a policy session, is best placed to take informed decisions on: thematic priorities in support of the implementation of the UNSPF including concrete steps to accelerate progress towards the GFGs, and the integration of forest related actions in the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and national biodiversity strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; invitation to Members' voluntary national contributions; call for the production of new outreach materials to present forests' contributions to the 2030 Agenda; strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting by establishing an advisory group on reporting to the Forum, preparing another Global Forest Goals report in 2026, and continued capacity building in collaboration with FAO; invitation to strengthen means of implementation by scaling up the activities of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network; identification of emerging issues such as the policy coherence in the forest and energy sectors to meet the SDGs, and scaling up technical assistance, financing, knowledge management, and information sharing in sustainable forest management, ecosystem restoration, landscape planning and management, sustainable agricultural intensification, biofuels development, ecotourism, and linked policy areas.

19. FAO made an important contribution to the technical discussions, both as a UN system organization and as member and chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). As one of the few organizations whose workplans are aligned with the UNSPF, FAO plays a key role in several areas of work contributing to the implementation of the UNSPF, in particular in monitoring, assessment and reporting, through the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and the global cores set of forest-related indicators (GCS). These are essential sources for UNFF to perform its review function, and the potentials in FAO's State of the World's Forest, were also recognized in this context.

20. FAO also informed the Forum on the activities of the CPF, which were seen as instrumental in supporting the Forum's work and providing technical support to Members in their work towards the GFGs. While noting the value of CPF's support, the Forum also identified several areas for further increasing CPF's effectiveness. These included the stronger support by the governing bodies of individual member organizations to the work of the CPF, analysing CPF members' individual workplans' relations with the GFGs and associated targets, consideration of virtual events in relation to the CPF workplan for the benefit of UNFF members, and taking stock from examples of other interagency networks within and outside the UN system.

21. This guidance of the Forum further strengthened several of the recommendations of the Organization-led Initiative (OLI), which was organized by FAO and the UNFF Secretariat, in collaboration with other CPF members, in February 2023 in Rome, with the aim of providing an opportunity for experts from Members of the Forum, CPF member organizations, and regional and subregional partners, to express their views on actions related to the CPF, as outlined in ECOSOC resolution 2022/17.

22. In line with the above resolution and in response to these recommendations, the CPF is currently conducting its internal process to explore opportunities for further enhancing its support to the implementation of the UNSPF and increasing efficiency further. The results of this work, together

with the outcomes of the OLI, will be presented to the Open-ended intergovernmental Ad hoc Expert Group (AHEG) on the preparations for the Midterm Review, which will be held on 10-13 October 2023 in Vienna, and through it, to the 19th session of UNFF.

C. The 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

23. The 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place on 6-18 November 2022 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. It was attended by 49,704 participants, representing 199 Parties, and delegates from observer organizations and media, making it the largest COP in history.

24. The momentum for forests, gained at COP26 in 2021 continued at COP27. During a high-level summit on 7 November 2022, world leaders launched the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP). The FCLP is a voluntary partnership of 26 countries and the European Union committed to delivery, accountability and innovation in support of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration. The FCLP, currently co-chaired by the United States of America and Ghana, focuses on six action areas: 1) international collaboration on the sustainable land use economy and supply chains; 2) mobilizing public and donor finance to support implementation; 3) shifting the private finance system; 4) supporting initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities; 5) strengthening and scaling carbon markets for forests; and 6) building international partnerships and incentives to preserve high-integrity forests.

25. A section on forests was included in the final Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, which reinforced REDD+ as outlined in Article 5 of the Paris Agreement and highlighted the importance of nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches to promote both mitigation and adaptation benefits. The focus on adaptation and loss and damage during COP27 creates important opportunities to elevate the key role of forests and trees in countries' efforts to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change.

26. FAO's work on forests and climate change is embedded in the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-31) Better Environment Programme Priority Area on 'Climate change mitigating and adapted agrifood systems', along with the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031.

27. Through strengthening the role of forests in global climate policy, developing countries' capacities for forest-based climate action, and scaling up action on the ground, FAO plays an important role in supporting Members in their efforts to advance forest solutions for the climate crisis.

D. The Outcomes of the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

28. The first part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP-15) convened virtually from 11 to 15 October 2021, with a limited number of delegates physically present in Kunming, China, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting resulted in the adoption of the Kunming Declaration.

29. The second part of the CBD COP-15 convened from 7 to 19 December 2022 in Montreal, Canada, under the presidency of China, and was attended by approximately 16 000 participants, representing 188 governments, UN and international organizations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), non-governmental organizations, academia, and the private sector.

30. Key milestone of the COP-15 was the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), as a successor of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to guide biodiversity policy

through four overarching goals to be achieved by 2050 and a set of 23 action-oriented Targets to be reached by 2030.

31. Over half GBF Targets are closely related to agrifood sectors, including sustainable forest and wildlife management, as part of the solutions to biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and the climate crisis.

32. Forestry, even though not always explicitly mentioned, is very relevant for several GBF Targets, including - but not limited to – ecosystem restoration (Target 2), protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM) (Target 3), impacts of climate change on biodiversity (Target 8), sustainable forest management (Target 10), and benefits from green spaces by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (Target 12).

33. Sustainable use, harvest, and trade in wild species – and their contribution to meeting people’s needs and providing benefits – are included in Targets 5 (safe and legal use, harvesting and trade of wild species) and 9 (benefits from the sustainable use of biodiversity)). Target 4 focuses on management actions to stop human-induced extinction of species and restore genetic diversity, including through minimizing human-wildlife conflicts.

34. A critical step towards closing the nature finance gap was the announcement of the creation of a new Global Biodiversity Framework Fund that will be established under the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The fund will complement existing support and further scale up financing for implementation, with the aim of mobilizing at least USD 200 billion per year by 2030 from all sources (GBF Target 19).

35. COP-15 also adopted the monitoring framework for the GBF that contains 26 headline indicators to be used in national reports for measuring progress. Of all headline indicators, four are under FAO custodianship, including area under restoration, and progress towards sustainable forest management (SDG indicator 15.2.1). Twenty of the component and complementary indicators, which are included in the decision but were not negotiated, are also under FAO custodianship.

36. To further operationalize the GBF monitoring framework, COP-15 established an *ad hoc* technical expert group (AHTEG) that will be composed by 30 technical experts nominated by Parties and 15 observer organizations, including FAO, with a time-bound mandate until the COP-16.

37. FAO’s work on forests and biodiversity is embedded in several *Better Environment* Programme Priority Areas of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, along with the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors. FAO’s work directly supports the development of the monitoring methodology for the GBF Target 2 on ecosystem restoration. FAO Forestry is leading the Task Force on Monitoring in support the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. FAO Global Forest Resources Assessments (FRA) provide essential information for understanding the extent of forest resources, their development, condition, management and uses. Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme provides a solid opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the COP-15 decision on sustainable wildlife management. The Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) is jointly working together on designing development of the monitoring methodology for the GBF Target 4 on measuring human-wildlife conflicts and Target 5 on sustainable use of wildlife species.

38. FAO is in the process of developing a comprehensive Global Programme on Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Forestry to enhance the role of sustainably managed forests and trees outside forests in biodiversity conservation, management, and sustainable use. The Programme builds on the recommendations of the FAO-CIFOR global review of biodiversity mainstreaming in forestry.

E. Update on the 2025 edition of the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessments

39. FAO has been monitoring the world's forest resources through periodic assessments conducted at the request of its member countries since 1946. The information provided by the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) presents a comprehensive view of the world's forests and the ways in which the resource is changing. Such a clear global picture supports the development of sound policies, practices and investments affecting forests and forestry.

40. Since 2005, the backbone of FRA has been the country reporting process where the best available and most up-to-date information from all countries and territories is compiled and analysed. FAO requests all countries to nominate a FRA National Correspondent who coordinates the preparation of the FRA report following standardized definitions, format and methodology. Since FRA 2020, the reports are prepared and submitted to FAO through a dedicated online platform.

41. As part of the country reporting process to FRA 2025, FAO is conducting a series of regional and sub-regional workshops. The workshops focus on providing technical assistance and guidance to the national correspondents on the compilation and finalization of the FRA 2025 country reports, while providing a forum for the national correspondents to share their experiences with colleagues from other countries. These workshops are also key to increase FAO's support for capacity building in forest resources assessment and reporting.

42. The FRA 2025 Regional workshop for Latin America was held in Panama City, Panama, at the end of March 2023. In total, seventeen FRA National Correspondents and collaborators participated in person (another nineteen participants joined remotely via Zoom for part of the workshop). They were provided with guidance on the FRA 2025 reporting process and the functionalities of the FRA platform as well as specific technical guidance on the reporting with the objective to ensure a harmonized reporting and improved transparency.

43. FAO is currently exploring the possibility to organize a second workshop for the countries of the region in the second half of the year to support the countries to finalize their reports. The data collection for all the 236 countries and territories of the world is foreseen to be completed in 2023.

F. State of the World's Forests 2024 (SOFO 2024)

44. FAO's flagship publication "*The State of the World's Forests*" (SOFO) presents data and analysis on the interaction between forests and people every two years, with a focus on a specific pertinent topic. SOFO complements the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA), issued every five years, as well as other forest-related publications.

45. In line with the new FAO Strategy on Science and Innovation, the next version of SOFO will highlight forest-related innovations that can support implementation of the three interrelated pathways involving forests and trees presented in SOFO 2022 to enhance their benefits for societies, communities, foresters and farmers. These pathways are: sustainably using forests and building green value chains; halting deforestation and maintaining forests; and restoring degraded lands and expanding agroforestry.

46. Forest-related innovations covered in the next SOFO will focus on cutting-edge processes, tools and technologies that support policy and management decisions along the three pathways, including through more up-to-date and detailed information on forests and innovations in how forests are monitored and information is shared. SOFO will also delve more deeply into the sustainable use pathway by highlighting how innovations in processing and the development of new forest products can increase productivity, help generate local profit, improve livelihoods and replace fossil-based materials. In addition, SOFO will recognise the important role that a robust innovative culture that promotes collaboration and workplace diversity has on successfully supporting and implementing all types of innovation.

47. The SOFO 2024 will be launched at the 27th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 27) held from 22 to 26 July 2024.

G. The 2nd World Forum on Urban Forests

48. Urban Forestry is one of the pillars of the FAO Green Cities Initiative, which promotes the integration of urban forestry, urban agriculture and urban food systems into urban planning, as key elements of sustainable urban development. A number of pilot activities have been carried out or are ongoing, e.g. in Dominica and Honduras.

49. FAO also actively promotes the role of urban forestry through knowledge exchange and networking activities. The Third Latin American and Caribbean Forum on Urban Forests took place in Guadalajara, Mexico in October 2022, with over 300 participants and focused on the potential and current contribution of urban forests and trees to the economy and livelihoods of urban communities in Latin America, in an environment of recovery from the onslaught of the COVID 19 pandemic. The next edition will take place in the second half of 2024.

50. The 2nd World Forum on Urban Forest, which is co-organized by FAO and a number of partners in the United States of America and European, will be held in Washington DC from 16 to 20 October 2023. The aim of the Forum is to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG11, and the New Urban Agenda and optimize actions related to urban ecosystems and green spaces.

H. The Latin American Network for Technical Cooperation in National Parks, Other Protected Areas, Wild Flora and Fauna (REDPARQUES)

52. Protected areas and biodiversity are closely related to the FAO Work Program. Since its creation in 1983, FAO is performing as the Technical Secretariat of REDPARQUES¹. With the engagement with different donors, funds and organizations such as the Autonomous Organization of National Parks of Spain, the European Union, the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMUB), WWF, IUCN, PNUMA, ELAP-UCI, among others, REDPARQUES after 40 years of existence, is consolidated as a technical mechanism made up of public and private institutions and specialists from countries of Latin America and the Caribbean who work on the subject of protected areas, wild flora and fauna. Its purpose is to progressively increase technological and management capacity, based on the exchange of experiences and knowledge among members. The relevance of REDPARQUES and its contribution to protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures was recognized by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2018.

53. CONANP-México is acting as its Regional Coordinator of REDPARQUES for the period of 2022-2023, elected by the National Coordinators appointed by each of the governments of its 23 member countries (usually the Director of the National Protected Areas Systems).

54. From 2014 to 2021, FAO supported REDPARQUES as implementing agency of two EU funded projects that aimed at the consolidation and implementation of the “Amazon Vision – Integration of the Amazon Protected Areas”, mainly through capacity building, promotion of cooperation initiatives and technical support for visibility and impact.

55. Currently, FAO is supporting REDPARQUES through a technical cooperation agenda aimed at strengthening the governance of land tenure in protected areas of the region through the exchange of experiences, intersectoral dialogue and multi-stakeholder alliances with other networks such as the Inter-American Network of Cadastre and Land Registry, Commission of Lands of the REAF-Mercosur, and International Land Coalition; the generation of evidence for decision making on

¹ <https://redparques.com/>

governance of land tenure in protected areas in 10 Latin American countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Venezuela, Chile and Uruguay); and through capacity building.

I. The Latin American and Caribbean national forest inventory network

56. The Red de Inventarios Forestales Nacionales de América Latina y el Caribe, is a voluntary union of the managers, experts and collaborators of the NFIs of Latin American and Caribbean countries to harmonize definitions and criteria for measuring forests, with the objective of improving the comparability and transparency of data on forest resources in the region. Recently created, its first general assembly will be in August 2023, when its statutes come into force.

57. The main achievement so far is the book National Forest Inventories of the LAC region, developed in collaboration with the members of the National Forest Inventories Network. (Link in Spanish: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB7791ES> Link in English: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CB7791EN>), In addition, 8 meetings have taken place to harmonize 3 variables: forest area, volume and biomass. The harmonization process has made it possible to identify the needs of the participating countries to respond to the FRA definition of forests. It has also allowed several countries to develop for the first time a definition of biomass volume and area. The role of FAO has been to facilitate the meetings, coordinate the development of the book and the statutes.