



# NORTH AMERICAN FOREST COMMISSION

## THIRTIETH SESSION

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### OUTCOME OF GLOBAL POLICY PROCESSES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE REGIONAL FORESTRY COMMISSIONS

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Forests continue to be a crucial topic in several global processes and negotiations. This paper provides an overview of key developments of interest to the Commission, notably:

- The 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- UN Biodiversity Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- The High-Level Political Forum (2018/2019)
- The United Nations Climate Action Summit
- World Forum on Urban Forests
- World Congress on Agroforestry
- UN Decade on Family Farming
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
- UN Reform process
- Reform of the International Poplar Commission

## II. KEY OUTCOMES OF GLOBAL PROCESSES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FORESTRY

### A. The 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

2. The 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties (COP), also called the Katowice Climate Change Conference was held on 2-15 December 2018 in Katowice, Poland. The conference included the three governing bodies of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, and the three subsidiary bodies.

3. The major objective for COP24 was for countries to agree on the means of implementation of the Paris Agreement Work Programme, also known as the “Rulebook”, which defines the modalities for reporting and measuring progress towards the climate goals of the Paris Agreement. COP24 also concluded the Talanoa Dialogue, aimed at progressively raising the ambition of countries, private sector, civil society and other stakeholders. Additionally, the Polish Presidency advocated for carbon neutrality aiming to strike a balance between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and sequestration by forests and soils.

4. COP24 adopted the Katowice Climate Package<sup>1</sup>, which inter alia reaffirmed that in the context of NDCs all parties are to undertake and communicate ambitious efforts; and decided to forward 19 decisions for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA). Key outcomes are listed below:

- a) On Market Mechanisms (Article 6), lengthy discussions were held to find an agreement on voluntary carbon market mechanisms, including rules for trading overachievement of climate pledges and generation of carbon credits for sale. By the end of the negotiations, it was agreed that Article 6 would be deferred to COP 25.
- b) Climate Finance Reporting (Article 9) determines that developed countries shall and developing countries should report on any climate finance they provide. Countries will have to report the full value of loans and grants invested in the fight against climate change as climate finance starting from 2020. The reporting rules will be reviewed in 2023.
- c) Transparency (Article 13) sets rules on what, how often, and with which details countries should report on their climate efforts. Information to be reported includes: emissions, progress towards NDCs, adaptation, climate impacts, climate finance provided or received. Furthermore, a single set of rules applies to all countries with a flexibility for “those developing country parties that need it in the light of their capacities”. The reporting will take place every two years, starting from 2024.
- d) Global Stocktake (Article 14) – a process for taking stock of collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Paris Agreement and its long-term goals. The Global Stocktake will take place every five years starting from 2023. The process will be divided into three stages – information collection, technical assessment and consideration of outputs.
- e) Loss and damage caused by impacts of climate change was a concern raised by the most vulnerable countries. While a financial mechanism compensating loss and damage caused by climate change impacts was not agreed, countries may report these matters as stipulated in articles 13 and 14.

5. The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25), the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), and the second

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<sup>1</sup> FCCC/CP/2018/L.27

meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) will take place on 2-13 December 2019 in Chile.

## **B. UN Biodiversity Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

6. The United Nations Biodiversity Conference was held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt from 17 to 29 November 2018<sup>2</sup>. COP 14 agreed to accelerate action to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, adopted in 2010 for the 2011–2020 period. It also agreed on a process for developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework anticipated to be agreed upon at the next UN Biodiversity Conference in China in 2020<sup>3</sup>.

7. As part of this process, relevant organizations were invited<sup>4</sup>, when organizing meetings and consultations relevant to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, to consider dedicated sessions or space to facilitate discussions on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The FAO Regional Forestry Commissions are thereby invited to make use of relevant meetings including Regional Forestry Commission sessions to discuss and provide inputs to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in particular on forests, forest management and the restoration agenda, and on mainstreaming of biodiversity in the agricultural sectors. Inputs also can be provided through the meetings of the CBD subsidiary bodies, upcoming meetings of the open-ended intersessional working group on post-2020 global biodiversity framework (OEWG-2, February 2020, Kunming, China and OEWG-3 July 2020, Columbia) and through written submissions to the CBD.

8. Prior to COP 14, Egypt convened a high-level segment on 14 to 15 November 2018. Ministers at the high-level segment adopted the *Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration: Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planets*<sup>5</sup>. Prior to COP 14, on 13 November 2018, Egypt also hosted an African Ministerial Summit on Biodiversity, which resulted in the *African Ministerial Declaration on Biodiversity and the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Increased Resilience*<sup>6</sup>.

9. COP 14 also welcomed the efforts made to improve the consistency of reporting on national data on primary forest area reported under the Global Forest Resources Assessment<sup>7</sup>. COP14 encouraged members of the *Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)* to further coordinate the collection of biodiversity-relevant data and the development of methodologies for the spatial assessments of opportunities to advance biodiversity commitments<sup>8</sup>. COP14 requested the CBD Executive Secretary to continue working with FAO in promoting the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, and on the Global Forest Resources Assessment towards improved monitoring of progress under Aichi Biodiversity Target 5<sup>9</sup>.

10. With regard to inter-agency cooperation, COP14 welcomed the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and the Global Forest Goals and their targets<sup>10</sup>. These targets could potentially contribute to the basis for designing contributions to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

11. In the area of sustainable wildlife management, COP14 welcomed the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector and recognized the work by the *Collaborative Partnership on*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2018>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-34-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> CBD/COP/14/12

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/274b/80e7/34d341167178fe08effd0900/cop-14-afr-hls-04-final-en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> CBD/COP/14/30, paragraph 22

<sup>8</sup> CBD/COP/14/30, paragraph 35

<sup>9</sup> CBD/COP/14/30, paragraph 24

<sup>10</sup> CBD/COP/14/30, paragraph 33

*Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW)*<sup>11</sup>, for which FAO provides the secretariat<sup>12</sup>. The *Second Wildlife Forum*, organized by the CPW and the African Union Commission, took place as a parallel event to the UN Biodiversity Conference on 21 November 2018<sup>13</sup>. Further developments in this area will be considered by the CBD SBSTTA-23 in November 2019, in Montreal, Canada.

12. On the topic of protected areas, COP14 adopted the definition of *Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)*<sup>14</sup>. It invited IUCN, FAO and others to continue to assist Parties in identifying OECMs and in applying the guidance, and urged Parties to facilitate the mainstreaming of protected areas and OECMs into key sectors, including forestry.<sup>15</sup>

### C. The High-Level Political Forum (2018/2019)

13. The annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), tasked with taking stock on progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), took place in New York on 9-18 July 2018. The Chairperson of COFO, together with other FAO governing bodies, provided an input in response to the invitation of the President of ECOSOC. The COFO response is available in the miscellaneous document “FAO Committee on Forestry inputs to the High-level Political Forum 2019”.

14. This forum, under the theme “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies,” reviewed in depth six out of the 17 SDGs: Water and sanitation for all (SDG 6); sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG 7); cities and human settlements (SDG 11); sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12); sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (SDG 15); and SO2global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17).

15. The Background Note prepared for the review of SDG 15<sup>16</sup> presented a mixed picture of progress, with achievements in areas such as access and benefit sharing, and action to prevent alien invasive species, but also failure to stem biodiversity loss, deforestation and the illegal trafficking of wildlife.

16. The HLPF concluded with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration<sup>17</sup> in which countries *inter alia* committed to:

- the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halting deforestation, restoring degraded forests and substantially increasing afforestation and reforestation globally by 2020;
- increase efforts to facilitate investment in gender-responsive programmes that address problems of deforestation, land degradation, desertification, drought, sand and dust storms, biodiversity loss and water scarcity, including through implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the United Nations forest instrument and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and scaled-up support by the CPF;

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<sup>11</sup> CBD/COP14/INF/11

<sup>12</sup> CBD/COP/14/L.11, paragraph 9

<sup>13</sup> CBD/COP/14/INF/51

<sup>14</sup> “*Other effective area-based conservation measure*” means “a geographically defined area other than a Protected Area, which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive and sustained long-term outcomes for the *in situ* conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem functions and services and where applicable, cultural, spiritual, socio-economic, and other locally relevant values” (CBD/COP/14/8).

<sup>15</sup> CBD/COP/14/8

<sup>16</sup>[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20069200087.8\\_Formatted\\_Background\\_NoteSDG\\_15.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20069200087.8_Formatted_Background_NoteSDG_15.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLS/2018/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLS/2018/1&Lang=E)

- improve monitoring and reporting, including use of information and communications technology and remote sensing to tackle, in particular, illegal logging and wildlife trafficking, including poaching.

17. FAO provided substantive inputs to the review and the *State of the World's Forests 2018*<sup>18</sup> (SOFO 2018) subtitled: “**Forest Pathways to Sustainable Development**” analysed the contributions that forests and trees – and the people who use and manage them – can make to help meet all the SDGs. A specific event was held to launch SOFO 2018 during the High-Level Political Forum.

18. In 2019, the HLPF took place in New York on 9-18 July. The theme was "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality". The following six of the Sustainable Development Goals were reviewed in depth:

- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

#### D. The United Nations Climate Action Summit

19. A United Nations Climate Action Summit<sup>19</sup> will take place in New York on 23 September 2019 with the objective of boosting ambition and rapidly accelerate action to implement the Paris Agreement. To structure the process of identifying the transformational initiatives for the Summit, nine interdependent tracks have been defined:

- 1) The **Mitigation Strategy** will focus on strategies mainly for the major emitters.
- 2) The **Social and Political Drivers** track will focus on issues cutting across all the other tracks, including health and just transition and consider gender, climate and security and others.
- 3) The **Youth and Mobilization** track will focus on mobilizing youth and civil society in support of the Summit and streamline youth participation across all the tracks of work.
- 4) The **Energy Transition** track will focus on main elements of accelerating energy transition, including boosting renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, access and innovation as well as mobilizing investments for the energy transition.
- 5) The **Resilience and Adaptation** track will focus on integrating climate risks into public and private sector decision-making to assure sustainability of food, water and jobs for the future as well as to prevent disasters and to allow a quick recovery after disasters especially of the most vulnerable groups.
- 6) The **Nature-based Solutions** track will focus on forests and land-based ecosystems, smart agriculture and food systems, regenerating life in rivers, lakes and oceans and enabling all people (and families) to connect to nature.
- 7) The **Infrastructure, Cities and Local Government** track will focus on scaling ambitious commitments on low-emission and resilient infrastructure, specifically land-based transportation, buildings, water and waste systems and the requisite private and multilateral development bank financing. This track will also mobilize cities and subnational governments and necessary resources to develop and finance Paris-aligned plans and budgets.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.fao.org/state-of-forests/en/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>

- 8) The **Climate Finance and Carbon Pricing** track will focus on delivering on former commitments of providing USD 100 billion annually by 2020 for mitigation and adaptation.
- 9) The **Industry** track will focus on creating stronger commitments from the hard-to-abate sectors and build on positive momentum in areas such as shipping.

20. FAO is closely involved in the tracks on Nature-based solutions and on Resilience and Adaptation and is working with partners to help shape the event and increase commitments to relevant climate actions.

### **E. World Forum on Urban Forests**

21. From 28 November to 1 December 2018, the 1<sup>st</sup> World Forum on Urban Forests<sup>20</sup>, co-organized by FAO, the Municipality of Mantova and other partners, brought together over 600 representatives of national and local governments, academia, NGOs, international organizations and private sector from more than 70 countries to discuss the benefits of urban forests and trees for sustainable economic growth, health, environmental conservation, social cohesion and public involvement.

22. In view of the success of the event, FAO is already planning the next session in 2022 and is considering establishing a permanent mechanism to keep the momentum in between sessions through regional fora, networking and other activities. In between sessions of the World Forum on Urban Forests, FAO will continue to organize regional meetings. The Latin American meeting will take place from 5 to 8 November in Bogotá and FAO have started to discuss the possibility of organizing one meeting in Africa in 2020. Similarly, the third Asia-Pacific Forum on Urban Forests is currently planned for early 2020.

23. The two main outputs of the Forum were the Call for Action and the Tree Cities of the World programme. The Call for Action<sup>21</sup>, which FAO is actively disseminating in different fora, is intended to provide a reference for cities that want to develop communities, where urban and peri-urban forests help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Trees Cities of the World<sup>22</sup> is a recognition scheme for greener cities that was developed by FAO and the Arbor Day Foundation and its standards will be used as reference for the development of new FAO activities at city level. The aim of the scheme is to stimulate and support cities to reach the goals outlined in the Call for Action. In addition to promoting the efficient management of urban tree resources, the Tree Cities of the World scheme also aims to create an international network of cities, facilitating the sharing of knowledge and good practices.

24. FAO continues to provide support on the topic of urban forestry and is in the initial stages of developing a large-scale initiative called the Great Green Wall of Cities, which aims to use forests and trees as nature-based solutions to improve ecological continuity in and around cities in the Sahel and Central Asia.

### **F. World Congress on Agroforestry**

25. From 18 to 23 May 2019, the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Agroforestry, co-organized by INRA, CIRAD and ICRAF, was held in Montpellier, France. It attracted over 1000 representatives of national and local governments, academia, NGOs, international organizations and private sector from more

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.wfuf2018.com/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.wfuf2018.com/en-ww/call-for-action.aspx>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.wfuf2018.com/public/file/challenge.pdf>

than 70 countries, to discuss the benefits of agroforestry for food security, sustainable economic growth and environmental conservation.

26. During the opening plenary session, FAO confirmed its commitment to promote agroforestry in different ways and highlighted some of the processes in which it could play an important role, including the UN Decade of Family Farming, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the Upscaling Agroecology Initiative led by FAO. A new Forestry Working Paper on Agroforestry and Tenure was also launched by FAO during the Congress.

### **G. UN Decade of Family Farming**

27. On 29 May, the UN Decade of Family Farming<sup>23</sup> (DFF 2019-2028) was formally launched at FAO, which is co-hosting this important initiative with IFAD, with guidance from a multi-country and multi-stakeholder Global Steering Committee. The DFF gives an extraordinary opportunity for the United Nations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in an inclusive, collaborative and coherent way. Family farming comprises many social groups including smallholder families, forest producers, fisherfolks, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and local communities. They all have a close relationship with farming in the context of different landscapes, where they produce crops, harvest, collect and add value to a variety of forest and farm products, raise livestock and fish for their livelihood. Concrete experiences show that when farmers get organized and strengthen their collaboration, together, they achieve better results, playing key roles in climate resilience, forest and landscape restoration, poverty reduction, inclusive value chains, rural development, gender equity and many SDGs.

28. The FAO Forestry Department has been playing a key role in the development of the DFF through the Forest and Farm Facility<sup>24</sup> (FFF), which provides support to improve the enabling environment and strengthen the capacity and role of forest and farm producer organizations. FFF e.g. helped organize an exchange between 80 leaders of forest and farm producer organizations at a global Conference on the DFF convened by the World Rural Forum in Bilbao, Spain in March 2019. Participants were able to provide specific input into the design of a strategic action plan for the DFF including references to the importance of forests and trees for family farming and to Pillar 4 of the strategy, which aims to “Strengthen Family Farmers’ organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and to provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum”.

29. The DFF provides a useful mechanism for countries to highlight the linkages between forests, farms and other elements of the landscape by focusing attention on the role and challenges faced by the people, almost all family farmers, who depend on and help sustain forests. National strategies will be developed at the country level and national forestry departments are encouraged to engage actively in this process, while the Forestry Department will continue to provide leadership in the implementation of the DFF through Forest and Farm Facility, Social Forestry Team and other programmes.

### **H. UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**

30. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously passed resolution A/RES/73/284<sup>25</sup>, designating 2021-2030 as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. This resolution was co-sponsored by 72 Member States. FAO and United Nations Environment Programme were invited to lead the implementation of the Decade in collaboration with the secretariats of the Rio

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/decade/en/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.fao.org/forest-farm-facility/en/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/73/284>

conventions, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the United Nations system.

31. In the resolution, the UN General Assembly encourages Member States *“to mainstream ecosystem restoration into policies and plans to address current national development priorities and challenges due to the degradation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, biodiversity loss and climate change vulnerability, thereby creating opportunities for ecosystems to increase their adaptive capacity and opportunities to maintain and improve livelihoods for all”*.

32. FAO is working closely with UN Environment and other key partners to prepare a series of consultations with Member States and other stakeholders to inform about the purpose of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration - and on initial steps taken to plan for its implementation - and to solicit views on what will be needed to significantly scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

### **I. UN Reform process**

33. Shortly after he took office, the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres embarked on a sweeping reform of the UN system<sup>26</sup> strongly supported by Member States. It has three pillars: Development, Management and Peace & Security.

34. The most direct impact on the work of FAO is the reform of the UN Development System – how UN delivers at country and regional level. One major change has already taken place: As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019, the UN Resident Coordinators now report directly to the UN Secretary-General and no longer to UNDP. They will lead the UN Country Teams and ensure coherence in delivery of support across the UN system. FAO and its Member Countries are encouraged to take full advantage of this by engaging in the early stages of the development of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (the UN equivalent to FAO’s Country Programming Framework) to help ensure that forestry issues are given the priority they deserve in these discussions.

35. The management reform aims to empower managers and staff, simplify processes, increase accountability and transparency and improve on the delivery of UN’s mandates. While most of the management reform applies only to the UN Secretariat and not to the specialized agencies such as FAO, the UN system-wide Gender Parity Strategy<sup>27</sup> adopted in 2017 is one of the strategies, which applies to all UN agencies. It sets targets for equal representation of women and men at all levels within all UN agencies.

### **J. Reform of the International Poplar Commission**

36. The International Poplar Commission (IPC) is an Article XIV body of FAO founded in 1947 to facilitate land restoration. Today, it has 38 Member Nations on five Continents and works to improve rural livelihoods through restoration and reforestation worldwide. To date, the IPC has focused on trees of the Salicaceae family, which only grow in temperate and boreal climatic zones. On 6 February 2019, Member Nations endorsed amendments proposed to the IPC Convention expanding the IPC’s scope to fast-growing species suitable for all climatic zones<sup>28</sup>. At its 41st Session, the FAO Conference concurred with these amendments, bringing them into force.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://reform.un.org/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://reform.un.org/content/gender-parity-strategy>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/MX572EN/mx572en.pdf>



37. Italy will co-host the Twenty-sixth session of the International Poplar Commission at FAO headquarters in October 2020. In this session, Member Nations will meet to chart a path forward for the IPC's work under its new scope.

### **III. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMISSION**

38. The Commission may wish to:

- Take note of the forest-related outcomes of COP24 of the UNFCCC and invite countries to consider how to strengthen forest-related contribution to their respective NDCs;
- Take note of the forest-related outcomes of the CBD COP 14 and invite countries to provide input to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- Take note of the conclusions of the HLPF and strive to implement the commitments pertaining to forests listed in the Ministerial Declaration;
- Invite countries to promote nature-based solutions to climate change and encourage participation in the United Nations Climate Action Summit;
- Take note of the outcome of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Forum on Urban Forests and invite countries to promote the Tree Cities of the World initiative;
- Recommend COFO to consider the opportunities provided by the UN Decade on Family Farming and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration for upscaling forest and landscape restoration activities;
- Take note of the UN reform process and encourage developing countries to ensure that forestry issues are given the priority they deserve in the development of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework documents for their country;
- Invite IPC Member Countries to engage in the IPC's continued reform and invite countries not members of the IPC to consider joining the IPC under its new scope.

39. The Commission may wish to request FAO to:

- Continue contributing to the Global Climate Action Agenda and to promote forest related initiatives, projects and programmes as well as support countries in the development of their forest and other land use related proposals for the Green Climate Fund;
- Explore ways and means to help further enhance the forest sector's contribution to post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- Further promote urban forestry activities;
- Take an active part of the UN Decade on Family Farming and scale up its support to forest and farm producer organizations through the Forest and Farm Facility;
- Inform COFO on plans for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.