



FAO FORESTRY



FAO regional forestry commissions meet in Mongolia, Argentina, the United States and Spain

FAO, through its decentralized forestry structure, supports six regional forestry commissions, one each for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Near East and North America. Meeting every second year, the regional forestry commissions:

- provide a neutral forum for discussing and assessing technical and policy issues and trends of relevance to forestry in the region;
- develop and advance mechanisms for regional and subregional cooperation in addressing forestry problems;
- advise FAO on policy formulation and on priorities for its forestry programme.

Four of these regional forestry commissions held sessions in the latter part of 2002.

Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission

Key issues highlighted at the nineteenth session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC), held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia from 26 to 30 August 2002, included capacity building for monitoring of forest degradation and desertification trends; afforestation and reforestation efforts; assessing, monitoring and management of tree resources outside forests; formulation and implementation of national codes of practice for forest harvesting; awareness raising about forest certification systems; effective watershed management; and decentralization and devolution of forest management.

The Commission recommended greater support for:

- developing and implementing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;
- forest fire management;
- reform of forestry institutions;
- promotion of forest law enforcement and good governance;
- sustainable use of non-wood forest products;
- developing viable livelihoods for forest-dependent people;
- improving access to markets.

Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission

The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) held its twenty-second session from 7 to 11 October 2002 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Delegates emphasized the need for collection of forest information not only on forest resources, but also on market trends and behaviour, illegal felling and trade of forest products, instruments for the promotion of trade, the state of forest industry, the status of education and training in the sector, and the emergence of new forest products.

The Commission recommended that FAO give greater attention to areas such as the identification and valuation of forest environmental services; the contribution of the forest sector to gross domestic product; rural community access to forest resources; and the economic potential of forests in order to attract investment. The Commission also recommended that FAO strengthen its efforts to help countries identify and mobilize sources of funding and technical cooperation for their national forest programmes.



Delegates discussed the progress of the forestry outlook study for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will look ahead to the year 2020.

Other topics discussed included regional participation in future global forest resources assessments; integration of forest policies with policies of other sectors; forest certification; and illegal forest extraction.

North American Forest Commission

At the twenty-first session of the North American Forest Commission (NAFC), held in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, United States of America from 22 to 26 October 2002, heads of the national forest agencies of the member countries reported on recent developments in the sector: new partnerships and alliances in Canada; the establishment of a new National Forest Commission in Mexico; and the particular challenge of forest fire management in the United States.

The Commission gave particular attention to three topics: planted forests, recognizing that the proportion of wood products that originate from planted forests is expected to continue to increase in the region (as elsewhere in the world); watershed management, endorsing the high priority that FAO is giving to forests and water in its new Medium-Term Plan for 2004-2009; and criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

The Commission decided to establish a new working group on watershed management, and reviewed the activities of the other seven (on atmospheric change and forests; fire management; forest genetic resources; forest insects and diseases; forest inventory, monitoring and assessment; forest products; and silviculture).

Delegates recommended continued FAO attention to harmonization of forest-related definitions and forest fire management; further work on ecotourism and forest recreation and on linkage of science and policy issues; and follow-up to the International Year of Mountains.

European Forestry Commission

The thirty-first session of the European Forestry Commission (EFC), held in Barcelona, Spain from 4 to 8 November 2002, recommended greater support for:

- national forest programmes;
- involving civil society in forestry and forest policy development;
- increasing civil society's understanding and appreciation of forests and the environmentally friendly nature of wood products;
- economic incentives for sustainable forest management;
- implementation of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

Regarding monitoring and analysis of sustainable forest management, the Commission encouraged member countries to coordinate their requests for information collection at the international level with their own capacity to provide it; to use the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management prepared by the Ministerial Conference

on the Protection of Forests in Europe; to concentrate on data quality and consistency and filling gaps; and to publicize the successes of the forest sector in addressing sustainability issues.

The Commission discussed the key forestry issues confronting member countries, including:

- fostering economically viable forest management;
- maximizing forestry's contribution to rural development and poverty alleviation;
- developing the role of forests and wood in climate change;
- conserving biological diversity through sustainable forest management;
- managing forested watersheds and water sources;
- promoting good governance in the forest sector;
- enhancing human resource capabilities in sustainable forest management.

The Commission supported FAO's work on harmonizing definitions; its leadership of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests; and its efforts, through the CPF, to streamline country reporting to international forest-related processes. The need for support to watershed management and to the upcoming International Year of Freshwater (2003) was stressed.

Documentation

Background documentation and the full reports of the sessions are available on the Internet (www.fao.org/forestry/Forestry.asp) or can be obtained through the Meetings Officer, Forestry Department, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy (e-mail: Becky.Ortiz@fao.org).

Efforts to harmonize forest-related definitions continue

Harmonization of forestry terms is vital for effective communication and data exchange on forest-related issues between countries and organizations. In January 2002, FAO and a number of international partners (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], the Centre for International Forestry Research [CIFOR], the International Union of Forest Research Organizations [IUFRO]) held an expert meeting to initiate a process for harmonizing forest-related definitions. The aim was to take into consideration the various perspectives of climate change, forest resources assessments, biodiversity conservation and forest management.

At the first Expert Meeting on Harmonizing Forest-Related Definitions for Use by Various Stakeholders, the participants recognized the usefulness and the feasibility of their task, but also saw that they had barely been able to scratch the surface. The first meeting therefore recommended the preparation of a comprehensive analytical framework and the organization of another expert meeting to continue the process.

At FAO headquarters in Rome from 11 to 13 September 2002, 54 invited experts, resource people and observers met to discuss and



Some conclusions of the Second Expert Meeting on Harmonizing Forest-Related Definitions

Terms with minor differences in definitions, for which ways for further harmonization were identified

Forest; forest land; forested land; other wooded land; non-forest; reforestation; forest degradation; forest improvement

Terms used primarily in a regional rather than a global context, with differing meaning from region to region

Old-growth forest; semi-natural forest

Terms used inconsistently, for which modifications were proposed, with further cooperative work required

Other land (other than forest and other wooded land); afforestation; deforestation; planted forest; forest rehabilitation; forest restoration; forest fragmentation; secondary forest; trees outside forests; low forest cover

Supporting terms, referring to the condition or quality of forests, that would benefit from an effort to coin common, broadly accepted definitions

Forest plantation; natural forest; naturalness of forest and other forest conditions; managed and unmanaged forest

elaborate a draft analytical framework. The participants were selected on the basis of their specialized knowledge and familiarity with the ongoing work on forest-related definitions in various international fora, including the international conventions on climate change, desertification and biological diversity, and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The second Expert Meeting on Harmonizing Forest-Related Definitions for Use by Various Stakeholders was organized by the same partners as the first meeting, plus the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The main outcome is summarized in the Box.

The proceedings, published shortly after the meeting, report the meeting's conclusions and recommendations for further work. Also included are the framework paper "Development of a common framework for forest-related definitions" and other background documents, as well as annexes describing the group work. The proceedings can be viewed at: www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y4171E/y4171e00.htm

Electronic bulletins keep specialized audiences in touch

FAO has developed several forestry-related electronic bulletins on specific subjects which serve as fora for sharing current information and experiences among experts and non-experts alike.

CLIM-FO-L: Climate change and forestry mailing list

Various forestry practices have a significant role in mitigating climate change by helping to slow down the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that between 1995 and 2050, global carbon sequestration from reduced deforestation, forest regeneration and increased development of plantations and agroforestry could correspond to 12 to 15 percent of the carbon emissions from fossil fuels.

CLIM-FO-L is a bimonthly electronic journal on climate change and forestry. Periodically, a synopsis of contributions is sent to subscribers, indicating how to obtain more detailed information on the topic.

The contribution of subscribers is essential in making this a lively forum for exchange of up-to-date information on this issue of growing importance. The following types of information relevant to climate change and forestry are welcomed:

- publications, documents and speeches;
- Web sites;
- announcements of events and job opportunities;
- developments in climate change negotiations;
- opinions, comments and enquiries.

To subscribe online or to read past issues visit:

www.fao.org/forestry/climate



NWFP-Digest-L: Non-wood forest products digest

Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) are products of biological origin other than wood derived from forests, other wooded land and trees outside forests that may be gathered from the wild, or produced in forest plantations, agroforestry schemes and from trees outside forests. Examples of NWFPs include products used as food and food additives (edible nuts, mushrooms, fruits, herbs, spices and condiments, aromatic plants, game), fibres (used in construction, furniture, clothing or utensils), resins, gums, and plant and animal products used for medicinal, cosmetic or cultural purposes. NWFPs have attracted considerable global interest in recent years owing to the increasing recognition of their contribution to environmental objectives, including the conservation of biological diversity.

NWFP-Digest-L is a monthly electronic bulletin covering all aspects of non-wood forest products. It is sent to over 1 000 subscribers.

Contributions are welcomed from readers.

To subscribe online or to read past issues visit:
www.fao.org/forestry/FOP/FOPW/NWFP/new/nwfp.htm

RIL-Afrique-L: Reduced-impact logging for Africa

Global awareness of environmental issues has grown considerably over the past few decades, and as a result there has been increasing interest in reduced-impact logging (RIL), particularly in tropical forests. RIL can be defined as intensively planned and carefully controlled implementation of harvesting operations to minimize the impact on forest stands and soils, usually in individual-tree selection cutting.

RIL-Afrique-L is a bimonthly electronic bulletin on RIL and sustainable forestry practices targeted to French-speaking Africa. The bulletin, available only in French, allows exchange and discussion among various stakeholders in the forest sector.

To subscribe online or to read past issues visit:
www.fao.org/forestry/FOP/FOPH/harvest/RIL-Afrique-L/f-maildig-e.asp

How to subscribe

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Forest Energy Forum Network List (FEF-Net)

FEF-net was launched in July 2001 to disseminate the information prepared and generated within the framework of the wood energy planning and policy development component of the FAO-EC project on sustainable forest management in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

FEF-net aims at becoming an informal forum for discussion and exchange of experiences for national and international wood energy focal points regarding the entire range of activities carried out in the execution of the FAO Wood Energy Programme and its projects. It provides the focal points with an informal forum for discussion and exchange of experiences, as well as a quick direct source of information on:

- relevant projects, experiences and approaches;
- events, workshops, conferences and educational activities;
- relevant documents, Web sites, links and resources;
- publications, documents and speeches;
- opinions, comments and enquiries;
- news from FAO's forest energy Web site, www.fao.org/forestry/FOP/FOPW/ENERGY/cont-e.stm.

The information exchanged by FEF-Net is available in English, French and Spanish.