

REPORT

Porano (TR),
Italy,
19 September
2010

Executive Committee of the International Poplar Commission

Forty-fifth Session

INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report of the Forty-fifth Session

Porano (TR), Italy, 19 September 2010

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INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report of the Forty-fifth Session

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Forty-fifth Session of the Executive Committee of the International Poplar Commission (IPC) was hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at Villa Paolina in Porano (TR), Italy on 19 September 2010. The meeting, which opened at 08.30 hours, was chaired by Mr Stefano Bisoffi (Italy), Chairperson of the Executive Committee. Mr Walter Kollert, Secretary of the IPC, was responsible for the work of the Secretariat. Thirty-two participants attended, including ten of twelve elected members, three co-opted members, seven chairpersons, vice-chairpersons or technical secretaries of its seven working parties, four resource persons from various organs in Italy, three observers from the National Poplar Commission of Italy, and four persons from FAO, including the Secretary, IPC (*Appendix 2*).

2. Mr Bisoffi paid tribute to the memory of Mr Victor Steenackers, Chairperson of the IPC from 1988 to 2000, who passed away on 27 August 2010, at the age of 82. His entire working life had been dedicated to the promotion of poplars, starting as a young scientist at the Poplar Research Station of Geraarsbergen, then as its Director for many years. As a poplar breeder he obtained outstanding results that he was ready to share with the poplar community worldwide. He strongly advocated the conservation of genetic diversity, and a safe exchange of breeding material. Victor Steenackers had been active in the International Poplar Commission since the sixties; since 1969 he had been co-opted as a member of the Executive Committee and since 1980 he was the Chairperson of the Subcommittee for Breeding. He was elected Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the IPC in 1988, confirmed in 1992 and in 1996. Victor Steenackers had been one of the great personalities of the poplar world and the International Poplar Commission expressed its sincere gratitude for his dedication to international cooperation. The grief of all its members was with his family, and particularly with his daughter, Marijke, a member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases of Poplars and Willows.

3. Following, a minute of silence was observed in the memory of Victor Steenackers.

4. Mr Bisoffi informed the participants that the former Secretary, Mr Jim Carle had been appointed as Leader of the Forest Management Team, and that Mr Walter Kollert, Forestry Officer (Planted Forests), had taken over as Secretary of the Commission. He then expressed the gratitude of the Executive Committee for the dedication of Mr Jim Carle to the IPC and extended his best wishes to Mr Walter Kollert for his new duties.

5. Mr Bisoffi expressed his satisfaction with the large attendance of the meeting, with twelve (out of fifteen) members of the Executive Committee present and all but one of the working parties. He also welcomed Ms Lorenza Colletti, Mr Giuseppe Nervo and Mr Fabio Boccari from the National Poplar Commission of Italy, who were invited as observers to assist the Executive Committee on specific items of discussion on the agenda.

6. Mr Enrico Brugnoli, Director of the Institute of Agro-Environment and Forest Biology, National Research Council (CNR), Italy, welcomed the participants as the host of the meeting and introduced the research work of the Institute to the participants.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

7. Mr Bisoffi proposed the provisional Agenda to the Executive Committee and asked if any amendments were deemed necessary. The Agenda was unanimously adopted without amendments (*Appendix 1*).

III. CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

8. Mr Kollert announced that Mr Jagdish Kishwan, India, elected member of the Executive Committee, had sent a communication to the Secretariat announcing his retirement and expressing the view that, consequently, he was no more in a position to effectively contribute to the works of the Executive Committee. Mr Kollert reminded that Members of the Executive Committee were elected in their personal capacity and that the position of Mr Kishwan could not be filled by a non-elected member. However, considering the importance of India in the poplar sector and the pending candidature as the host country for the 24th Session of the IPC, Mr Kollert proposed to co-opt as a member Mr G.S. Rawat, Director General of the Indian Council of Forest Research and Education. The members of the Executive Committee unanimously approved the proposal.

9. An updated list of the members of the Executive Committee was attached in *Appendix 3* for reference.

IV. SUMMARY REPORTS OF THE ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS OF THE WORKING PARTIES AND THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON NOMENCLATURE AND REGISTRATION SINCE THE FORTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AND THEIR PROGRAMMES OF WORK TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE IPC

10. Introducing the item, Mr Bisoffi noted that the Working Parties were the real “life and blood” of the IPC, that they were essential in reaching the goals written in the Convention and in particular those aimed at promoting studies, exchanges of ideas and materials, meetings and study tours, and that they offered an invaluable service to the rest of the community, with special benefits to the development of less favoured parts of the world.

11. It was fully appreciated that all the work done by the Working Parties was based on the voluntary contribution of their members with intellectual satisfaction as the only reward, and that the work for the IPC often came on top of demanding professional commitments. Therefore, the Working Parties were requested to prepare a two-year programme of work based on significant but achievable activities, given the existing constraints and limitations to the potential contribution of the members.

12. Mr Bisoffi then invited the representatives of the Working Parties to report on the progress achieved since the 23rd Session and to reconsider the goals and activities for the coming two-year period, with a realistic view.

IV-a Working Party on Poplar and Willow Genetics, Conservation and Improvement

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/3770/en>

13. Ms Teresa Cerrillo, Chairperson of the Working Party, presented the activity report during the period November 2008-November 2010. Thirty countries had provided information for a database on breeding programmes and breeding collection, which had been completed, updated and presented during the meeting. Other activities had been initiated, such as a repository of photographic documents of poplar and willow cultivars, a working paper on selection methodology and a working paper on experimental design to be applied for poplar and willow breeding programmes.

14. In order to update information, the Technical Secretary used the database appearing in the IPC website to source appropriate people from member countries in order to gather information relating to the Working Party activities. However, it appeared that the list of names was not updated, explaining the reason why there was a poor response to the requests from the Working Party. A suggestion was that at the next session of the IPS in 2010 an opportunity be given to update the list to include researchers and office/role holders within member countries.

IV-b Working Party on Harvesting and Utilization of Poplar and Willow Wood

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/3767/en>

15. Mr Joris Van Acker, Chairperson of the Working Party, reported on activities and outputs since the last session of the IPC in Beijing, and on the Working Party's Action Plan for the period 2010-2012. He recalled that this was the eldest IPC Working Party, and mentioned its role and the specific functions of the IPC in the field of harvesting and utilization of poplar and willow wood.

16. Future activities up to 2012, based on the Action Plan presented at the last Executive Committee in Beijing, included: the creation of an addendum to Chapter 10 of the Book on Poplars and Willows in the World, entitled "Properties, processing and utilization"; the identification of key persons for the renewed WP network; the improvement of the network interaction and communication in order to work more efficiently. The following different topics will be part of future activities: networking; state-of-the-art data base; compilation of country-based information; support to young scientists; organization of meetings/ workshops/ conferences; the initiation of new research projects for the benefit of the poplar wood industry, and the development of quality standards for wood aiming at specific product requirements.

IV-c Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/3768/en>

17. The Chairperson of the Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases, Ms Marijke Steenackers, made a presentation, showing the following activities during the period 2008-2010: updating of the list of scientists active in the field of poplar and willow pathology/diseases; updating of a list of important diseases worldwide; inventory of selection and breeding programmes for disease resistance; updating of the list of recent publications.

18. A questionnaire on those subjects had been sent to possible new members of the Working Party, to which 20 research institutions/scientists had responded favourably.

19. Among the activities of the Working Party for the period 2010-2012, the following priorities were indicated: increase the membership list of active researchers; update the membership list of active researchers in poplar and willow diseases to be added to the Directory of Poplar and Willow Specialists and to the IPC Website; report on questionnaire results at the IPC session in 2012; prepare a database on Poplar and Willow disease projects and their relevant web links; post an annotated bibliography of Poplar and Willow disease publications to be uploaded to the IPC Website; prepare a newsletter with short notes on poplar and willow diseases and encourage contributors to add new information and ideas; inventory of methodology used to assess and select for disease resistance; and coordinate the chapter on diseases of the Book on Poplar and Willow in the World (by December 2011).

IV-d Working Party on Poplar and Willow Insects and Other Animal Pests

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/3769/en>

20. The programme of action presented during the 23rd Session included: to complete the Chapter on Poplar and Willow Insects and Other Animal Pests in the “Book on Poplars and Willows in the World”; to conduct a joint meeting with the Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases, to coincide with the 5th IUFRO International Poplar Symposium, Orvieto, Italy, September 2010; and to strengthen the Working Party on Poplar and Willow Insects and Other Animal Pests Web Portal on the IPC website (update list of entomologists and contact details, publications, main research areas, etc.); however progress on these points was envisaged when the Insect Chapter was completed.

21. The most important activity had been the completion of the above-mentioned book chapter by Mr John Charles and Ms Sylvie Augustin with the contribution of other entomologists working on Poplar and Willow insects. New contributions on key insect pests had been received, were being reviewed by Mr John Charles and Ms Sylvie Augustin and added as new boxes in the Chapter. The chapter had been reviewed by Messrs Jim Richardson, Jud Isebrands and Bill Matson. A glossary and illustrations had still to be included, but the chapter should be achieved and uploaded on the IPC Website soon.

22. Some modifications of the e-book on the Website had been introduced.

23. It had not been possible to develop the other activities planned within the Working Party because of the low number of people participating, the time needed by the preparation of the book Chapter and the lack of time for other activities.

IV-e Working Party on Production Systems of Poplars and Willows

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/3771/en>

24. No report had been received from this Working Party.

IV-f Working Party on the Environmental Applications of Poplars and Willows

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/26359/en>

25. Mr Judson Isebrands, Chairperson of the Working Party on the Environmental Applications of Poplars and Willows, made a short presentation. He recalled the Mission Statement and the scope of the Working Party.

26. The activities identified at the 23rd session of the IPC for the next four-year period were *inter alia*: updating and rationalization of the Working Party pages on the IPC Website; contribution to the FAO Poplar and Willow Book; production of four 10-page topical scientific information notes (two of them were in draft format – slope stabilization and waste water treatment); and the holding of two technical meetings. The first of these two meetings was coordinated with the IUFRO Symposium in Orvieto and took place immediately before this session of the IPC Executive Committee (17 to 18 September in Montelibretti (RM)); the second was proposed to be held in September 2011 in Alberta (Canada).

IV-g Sub-committee on Nomenclature and Registration

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/3765/en>

27. Ms Julia Kuzovkina, the Chairperson of the Sub-committee, assisted by the Vice-Chairperson, Mr Stefano Bisoffi and by the Technical Secretary, Mr Lorenzo Vietto, presented the activity report for the period November 2008 to September 2010. She clarified the role and functioning of the Register and recalled that the International Cultivation Registration Authority (ICRA) system was responsible for ensuring that each plant cultivar received a unique, authoritative botanical name. She also recalled that the FAO International Poplar Commission held the responsibility as the International Cultivation Registration Authority for the genus *Populus* (poplars, cottonwoods and aspens) and maintained lists of names, along with other information, about the cultivars already in the public domain, lists which were available to the international community as a free service, without commercial interest.

28. The genus *Salix* was among the woody plant genera for which the ICRA had not been appointed and no formal registration of its cultivars had been established. It was important that a similar system for *Salix* cultivar registration be in place as for *Populus*.

29. The priorities for period 2010-2012 were as follows: reinforce the Sub-committee by re-constituting a network of contact persons; raise awareness with the active cooperation of national poplar commissions; update the Poplar Register; establish the registration of *Salix* cultivars.

30. Activities planned included *inter alia*: contacting researchers who indicated their willingness to contribute to the work of the Sub-Committee; raising awareness of the importance of cultivar registration by identifying and contacting interested parties; focussing

on the creation of the updated version of the Poplar Register which should be published on the Website; continuing efforts towards the establishment of the *Salix* registration.

V. STRENGTHENING THE LINK BETWEEN THE WORKING PARTIES

31. Mr Bisoffi noted that some of the Working Parties were very active, whereas a few showed varying degrees of difficulties in achieving their goals. He therefore invited the Officers of the Working Parties to initiate a review of the mission and an internal debate on the WP future, considering a re-focus of the goals, merging with other Working Parties, even considering the WP suppression in case the “problems” that motivated its founding did not exist anymore or the goals were not achievable with the resources available.

32. At the same time due consideration should be given to the need for new Working Parties to address emerging problems or areas of weakness of the IPC, such as socio-economic aspects and policy/institutional issues.

33. Mr Martin Weih (from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU) stated that the major issues in the section “Future Activities” of all Working Parties were to make better use of the IPC Working Party homepage and to initiate collaborative projects on cross-cutting subjects involving Working Parties, e.g. on environmental issues and on climate change.

34. The leaders of the working parties were encouraged to make better use of the IPC Working Party homepage. The website for all Working Parties should be standardized, and responsibilities for inputs and updates assigned. Collaborative projects with active/creative leaders should be initiated, and the IPC-WP website improved to become more active and focused towards networking/collaboration possibilities.

VI. REPORT ON POPLAR TRENDS IN EUROPEAN IPC MEMBER COUNTRIES

35. Mr Fabio Boccalari, Vice-Chairperson of Pro-Populus and Chairperson of the Italian Association of Poplar Growers, and Mr Giuseppe Nervo, Italian Poplar Research Institute, reported on that item.

36. They described the different critical aspects in various European member countries of the IPC (France, Italy, Belgium, Spain) as well as the perspectives of the sector. The main objectives of Pro-Populus were: to increase the value of poplar as strategic raw material; to promote and support the production and the use of poplar; to create a platform for the exchange of information and knowledge; to encourage research studies on the different aspects of the poplar chain; and to carry out lobbying activities at the European Union level to support poplar.

37. The various recommendations of Pro-Populus to the European Union included *inter alia*: to ensure coherence and transparency in the texts; recognize the environmental benefits of poplar; encourage the development of fast-growing species; promote poplar cultivation; etc.

VII. SUMMARY REPORT ON POPLAR-RELATED EVENTS SINCE THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE IPC, BEIJING, 2008

38. Mr Walter Kollert, Secretary of the IPC, reported on poplar-related events since the twenty-third session of the IPC in Beijing in 2008: the International Workshop to “Improve the contribution of poplars and willows in meeting sustainable livelihoods and land-use”, held in Izmit, Turkey, in July 2009; the Meeting of European Poplar Producers (Pro-Populus/USSE/COSE), which took place in Valladolid, Spain, in May 2010; the Technical Cooperation Italy/China which brought a Chinese delegation to Italy in May 2010 and an Italian/IPC delegation to Siyang in July 2010; the International Workshop on Forest Restoration in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, using Treated Waste Water to Sustain Smallholders and Farmers Livelihood, which would take place in Tunisia in October 2010; and the informal poplar workshop that was planned to be conducted by the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) in late 2010.

VIII. REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP STATUS

39. Mr Walter Kollert, Secretary of the IPC, gave an overview on the membership status with the Commission. At the moment, the IPC had 37 member countries. Since 1990, around 11 countries had inquired with the Secretariat on the conditions of becoming IPC-members, however these inquiries did not translate into actual memberships for different reasons. The youngest member of the IPC is Finland which joined in 2000. It was discussed that a simpler mechanism to join the IPC should be considered to facilitate memberships.

IX. MANAGEMENT OF THE ITALIAN NATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION

40. Ms Lorenza Colletti, Secretary of the Italian National Poplar Commission (NPC), described the history of the National Commission as well as its main tasks. She noted that one of the most relevant NPC activities carried out during the last 15 years was the cooperation with the Watershed Authorities for the promotion of poplar cultivation along flooded river banks compatibly with the establishment and management of protected areas. The NPC supported the preparation of publications on relevant topics such as the “White Book on Poplar Cultivation” updated in 2007. NPC also actively promoted international cooperation with organizations (FAO, EU, Pro-Populus) and mutual exchange with other states, e.g. China. The NPC was also contributing to the next session of IUFRO, to be held the week after in Orvieto.

41. Ms Colletti also noted that the poplar area was continuously decreasing in Italy and that some innovative poplar uses found it difficult to get political support for field implementation. The NPC had apparently been formally included in a list of organizations under scrutiny in August 2008, but its Secretariat as well as the Forest Service (*Corpo Forestale dello Stato*) were cooperating to demonstrate its importance and the need to keep it ‘alive’.

X. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE IPC

42. Mr Stefano Bisoffi, Chairperson of the IPC, recalled that, in 2004, both China and India had offered to host the IPC session in 2008 and the Commission had decided that China would host the 2008 meeting while India would host the 2012 meeting. The representative of India renewed the offer of his country.

43. The representative of India made a presentation to the Executive Committee, highlighting the good framework conditions and infrastructure facilities available to the participants of the 24th Session of the IPC in 2012 and presented the provisions made by the Government of India to finance the session of the Commission. In terms of finance, Mr Bisoffi made it clear that the burden was shared between FAO and the Government of India. He mentioned that it was common practice that FAO and the host country conclude a standard Memorandum of Understanding, detailing the responsibilities and services to be provided by FAO and the host country respectively. Essentially:

- FAO would cover the costs of its Secretariat, of the documentation, and of interpreters. FAO would further offer financial assistance to participants from developing countries for travelling. The volume of this assistance would depend on the resources FAO obtains from various funding sources.
- The Government of India would be responsible for the entire organization, venue, logistics (transportation, equipment, particularly technical equipment for interpreters), host country secretariat, facilitation of visas, catering, study tours and other support services, privileges and immunities for all participants.

44. Mr Bisoffi declared that the host country may raise a registration fee for the Commission to cover the costs, but this fee should be kept to a reasonable level so that it does not become a deterrent. He also requested the representative of India that the Government of India, represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or Agriculture or Forestry, send an official communication to the Director-General of FAO by the end of 2010, confirming the willingness of the Government of India to host the Commission and to enter into a standard agreement letter and memorandum of responsibilities with FAO.

XI. STATUS REPORT ON THE BOOK ON POPLARS AND WILLOWS IN THE WORLD

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/32608/en>

45. Messrs James Richardson (Canada) and Jud Isebrands (United States of America) reported on the status of the Book on Poplars and Willows in the World. Chapters 2 and 7 had been completed and posted on the FAO/IPC Website in 2008, Chapter 4a in 2009 and Chapter 10 in 2010. By next December, Chapters 9 and 12 should be completed and posted on line. The other chapters should be completed between 2010 and 2012, to be ready for the 24th session of the IPC.

XII. OUTLOOK ON THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL POPLAR SYMPOSIUM (Orvieto, Italy, 20-25 September 2010)

46. Mr Meng-Zhu Lu (China), as a member of the IPS Scientific Committee, gave an overview on the programme of the Fifth International Poplar Symposium, which would take place the week after the IPC Executive Committee in Orvieto.

47. The Symposium was divided into seven sections: poplar genetic resources; new developments of sequencing technology and re-sequencing of poplar genome; development and application of poplar biotechnology for a low-carbon, sustainable society; innovative production systems for low input tree crops; interaction between poplars and the environment and the role of poplar, due to its short rotation character, in greenhouse gas balance, bioenergy and economic profitability, phytoremediation; the importance of understanding the plant metabolism and plant-pest interactions to improve pest and stress resistance; and the international cooperation for poplar research and applications.

XIII. OTHER MATTERS

48. There were no other matters to discuss.

CLOSING OF THE MEETING

49. Mr Stefano Bisoffi, after having acknowledged the good work of the Committee and having thanked all participants as well as FAO staff for their participation and commitment, declared the 45th session of the IPC Executive Committee closed.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda
3. Co-optation of new members
4. Summary Reports of the activities and outputs of the Working Parties and Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration since the Forty-fourth session of the Executive Committee in Beijing, China, 26 October 2008, and their programmes of work towards the Twenty-fourth session of the IPC
5. Strengthening the link between the Working parties
6. Report on poplar trends in European IPC Member countries
7. Summary report on poplar-related events since the Twenty-third session of the IPC, Beijing, 2008
8. Report on membership status
9. Management of the Italian National Poplar Commission
10. Arrangements for the Twenty-fourth session of the IPC
11. Status Report on the Book on Poplars and Willows in the World
12. Outlook on the Fifth International Poplar Symposium (Orvieto, Italy, 20-25 September 2010)
13. Other Matters

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(as of 19 September 2010)

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2. Vice-Chairperson: Mr Judson Isebrands (United States of America)
3. Ms Teresa Cerrillo (Argentina)
4. Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium)
5. Mr Patrick G. Mertens (Belgium)
6. Mr John Doornbos (Canada)
7. Mr Meng Zhu Lu (People's Republic of China)
8. Ms Catherine Bastien (France)
9. Mr Yeong Bon Koo (Republic of Korea)
10. Mr Sasa Orlovic (Serbia, Republic of)
11. Mr Theo Verwijst (Sweden)

Co-opted by the Committee:

12. Mr James Richardson (Canada)
13. Prof. Weilun Yin (People's Republic of China)
14. Mr Govind Singh Rawat (India)
15. Mr Martin Weih (Sweden)

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Working Party on Poplar and Willow Genetics, Conservation and Improvement:	Mr Ian Mc Ivor (New Zealand)
Working Party on Harvesting and Utilization of Poplar and Willow Wood:	Mr Joris Van Acker (Belgium)
Working Party on Poplar Insect and Other Animal Pests:	Ms Sylvie Augustin (France)
Working Party on Poplar and Willow Diseases:	Ms Marijke Steenackers (Belgium)
Working Party on Production Systems for Poplars and Willows:	Mr Theo Verwijst (Sweden)
Working Party on Environmental Applications of Poplars and Willows:	Mr Judson Isebrands (USA)
Sub-Committee on Nomenclature and Registration:	Ms Julia Kuzovkina (USA)

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Mr Zhang Qiwen (China)
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Mr Pedro Garnica (Spain, representing Europe)
Prof. Ahmed Koubba (Canada, representing North America)
Mr Raúl Suárez (Argentina, representing Latin America)
Technical Secretary: Mr Patrick G. Mertens (Belgium)

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