



## ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

### TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

Thimphu, Bhutan 9-11 June 2010

### INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS

#### SECRETARIAT NOTE

1. Resolution 61/193 of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests (IYF). The secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was requested to serve as the focal point for the implementation of activities linked to this milestone. Stakeholders at all levels (governments, civil society organizations, private companies etc.) were encouraged to use this occasion to raise awareness about the value of forests and how they can be sustainably managed. The celebration of the IYF aims at raising general awareness of the important roles of forests in national socio-economies, welfare of rural populations, and environmental protection; as well as informing the public on the need for sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. A number of countries and organizations have already expressed interest in launching various activities.

2. The IYF will provide excellent opportunities for the forest sector to showcase success stories, build partnerships, encourage public participation, and build awareness of important forestry issues. To support these objectives, the UNFF Secretariat has initiated a range of preliminary activities: a unique IYF logo is being designed; an official website will serve as a centrepiece for information; and a commemorative stamp series will be issued to honour the celebration of IYF. UNFF is also liaising closely with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to learn from the work carried out in implementing the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, and to capture potential synergies.

3. The IYF will be a global initiative, but much of the enthusiasm and energy that will make IYF a success will be triggered at regional and national levels. National committees will take responsibility for co-ordinating and publicizing country-level celebrations and will communicate action plans to UNFF. Activities proposed by UNFF to promote IYF at regional and national levels include:

#### *Regional level*

- Awards to be granted to agencies, associations or individuals for remarkable actions or practices relating to forests and forestry
- Regional round tables, conferences and seminars
- Publications, flyers, posters, etc.

IYF may also be used to put forestry-related matters on the agenda of regional and sub-regional fora (such as ASEAN, Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)).

The Secretary-General's Report on Preparations for IYF (United Nations A/64/274) identifies several events in the Asia-Pacific region at which celebrations of IYF will be marked, including:

- The second Ministerial Meeting on Forests of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China.
- A meeting of senior forest officials from ASEAN member States and China on regional policy dialogue.
- The second Asia-Pacific Forestry Week in conjunction with the Twenty-fourth Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission.
- The first annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation.
- The tenth Pacific heads of forestry meeting to review past and present implementation of forestry activities in the Pacific.

#### *National level*

- Activities related to mass media, such as:
  - preparation and broadcast of television and radio messages
  - publication of articles in newspapers
  - press conferences regarding events to be organized
- Web sites with information regarding the IYF and planned activities
- Publication of booklets, brochures, leaflets, posters and education materials
- Contests: for example, children's paintings, sporting events, essay and article writing, photography
- Exhibitions and photo displays, film and video projections (in schools in particular)
- Tree-planting initiatives, field days, organization of tours and excursions
- Other ideas: the sky's the limit!

The Commission may wish to consider how IYF can be used to promote and improve the status of forests and forestry in member countries and throughout the region. Delegates may particularly wish to suggest ways in which the IYF can be celebrated in conjunction with the convening of the Twenty-fourth Session of the Commission and the Second Asia-Pacific Forestry Week, which are expected to be held in the second half of 2011.