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NEAR EAST FORESTRY COMMISSION

NINETEENTH SESSION

NEAR EAST FORESTRY WEEK

HAMMAMET, TUNISIA
5 – 9 APRIL 2010

**Forests and range: adapting to global changes for sustainable
development**

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

Organization

1. The Committee on Forestry (COFO) held its Nineteenth Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 16 to 20 March 2009. The session was held with the first World Forest Week.
2. The participation of the Chairpersons of the six Regional Forestry Commissions, representing the COFO Steering Committee, in the preparation of the COFO agenda was highly appreciated and a request was made to continue with this format in order to ensure that issues of concern to the regions were adequately addressed. Among the Near East member countries, Morocco and Turkey were nominated to participate in the COFO Drafting Committee.

FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry

3. As requested by the 18th Session of the Committee in March 2007, a draft FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry was developed. The new Strategy, which will provide guidance for FAO's work in forestry over the next ten years, replaced the FAO Strategic Plan for Forestry that was endorsed by the 14th Session of COFO in 1999.
4. The Committee stressed the need for FAO to have a strong Forestry Department, including the strengthening of forestry work in the decentralized offices. It also supported the recommendation of the Independent External Evaluation of FAO to increase the share of the overall FAO budget that is allocated to forestry.

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Adapting forest policy and institutions to change

5. The Committee underscored the need to adapt national forest institutions and policies in order to respond to economic, political, social, environmental and technological changes taking place at all levels, national, regional and global. It recommended that FAO, in collaboration with other international agencies, reinforce its capacities to assist member countries in this undertaking and in implementing forest policies and reforming forestry institutions. It also recommended that FAO facilitate the sharing of experience among countries, particularly through regional and sub-regional sessions of the "Heads of Forestry Dialogue".

Sustainable forest management (SFM) and climate change

6. Climate change has become an issue of major and universal concern and the strategic importance of forests in mitigating and adapting to climate change was highlighted. In this regard, the linkage which exists between implementation of SFM and reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) was underscored. The Strategic Framework for forests and climate change, presented by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), also stressed the need for countries and international organizations to work hand in hand to implement sustainable forest management.

7. In this context, member countries were encouraged to participate actively in the search for national and international responses of the forestry sector to the question of climate change. It was recommended that FAO, in collaboration with other organizations, strengthen national capacities to develop and adopt appropriate forestry policies and practices which may help mitigate and adapt to climate change. To this end, various actions may be considered, including forest carbon assessments, mainstreaming climate change issues into national forest programmes, and enhancing understanding of the effects of climate change on forests.

Genetic resources

8. The importance of genetic resources and their management led the Committee to support the recommendation made by the Commission for Food and Agriculture and the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, that FAO prepare a report on the State of World Forest Genetic Resources, by 2013, which would serve as a reference for action at the national, regional and global levels. Member countries and partners organizations were urged to actively collaborate in this task.

State of the World's Forests (SOFO)

9. The theme of the 2009 edition of *The State of the World's Forests* was *Society, Forests and Forestry: adapting for the future*. The Committee welcomed the topics addressed in this edition. They raised various aspects of the impacts of global and regional trends on forests, due to unprecedented challenges the world faces today. Because of their pertinence, the topics addressed in this edition were extensively commented on.

XIII World Forestry Congress

10. In view of the XIIIth Forestry Congress occurrence in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 18 to 23 October 2009, the Committee encouraged members to actively participate in this great event, which provided a remarkable occasion for the global forest community to come together, to share and to address issues of common concern.

Date and place of the next COFO session

11. The Committee proposed that its next session be held in Rome in October 2010, due to the change of dates of the FAO Conference from November to June, starting in 2011.