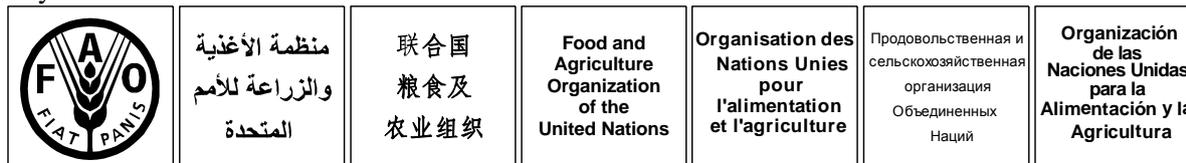


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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

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STRENGTHENING FORESTRY'S CROSS-SECTORAL LINKAGES

Integrating forests with environmental and land use policies at all levels

I. BACKGROUND

1. Global food demand is rising, driven by population increases, economic growth and urbanization, particularly in developing countries. This trend is expected to continue for the next decades reaching a 60 percent increase in total food demand by 2050. There are an estimated 925 million undernourished people, while “hidden hunger” affects around 2 billion people. Forests contribute in many ways to enhancing food security, but these often remain unrecognized in key land use decisions.
2. Global primary energy demand is expected to increase by a third during the period 2008-2035, according to the International Energy Agency. The gap between energy demand and supply is increasing as population and income per capita grow in developing countries. In 2011, an estimated 16 percent of total energy requirements were met by renewable energy, including woody biomass. In many developing countries wood is the main source of domestic energy. At the same time, it provides an additional source of economic activity and rural incomes. Energy from woody biomass will continue to play an important role in addressing future energy challenges in developing as well as in developed countries.
3. Trends for 2050 suggest growing scarcities of agricultural land, forest, water and biodiversity resources. This is driven by accelerated intensification of human activities with increasing pressure on natural resources, which threatens ecological functions and makes the goal of achieving sustainability more difficult. There is more competition over land for the production of food, biofuels, and biomass (“fibre”) as a substitute for petrochemicals and other materials. Trends in land use reflect changes in demand, market competitiveness and policy decisions at different levels. Land use change decisions impact on livelihood opportunities and resilience of rural populations, biodiversity, ecosystem services and future productive capacity of the land.
4. Over the last decades large-scale primary producers have emerged along with small-scale family and subsistence land use, changing the power balance in land use decisions. At the same time, by 2005 there were still about 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty and at least 70 percent of the world’s extremely poor live in rural areas. Poverty often is a problem of poor employment quality, but also of tenure arrangements and weak governance. Inadequate and insecure tenure rights to

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natural resources affect not only consumption, but also and in particular production, as they undermine incentives for rights holders to invest in sustainable management of the resource.

5. Climate change has an impact on all land uses and is expected to increase in the decades to come, in spite of the measures that may be taken to mitigate it. Vulnerable communities and people in fragile environments, such as dry lands, mountain areas and coastal zones will be particularly affected. Mitigation strategies in agriculture and adaptation to climate change and creating greater resilience is a growing concern and needs to be considered in land use change decisions.

II. MAIN ISSUES

6. Governments and other stakeholders, individually and collectively, face a central and overriding challenge: the need to find, in the context of growing pressure on land use, the most appropriate balance between competing needs. More diverse stakeholders than in the past are seen to have a legitimate voice in deliberations on land use. Governance mechanisms need to involve, in an equitable way, a broader range of stakeholders with very different power in land use decision-making processes, including also in the implementation of jointly agreed activities. In practice, such mechanisms hardly exist, or forestry stakeholders often find themselves overridden by more powerful interests. **The first challenge** is to establish and/or strengthen existing land use governance mechanisms at all levels that better enable informed discussion and decisions on land use and land use change issues affecting forests.

7. Forests contribute to economic growth and improved livelihoods. Enhancing the benefits of forests in the context of an overall need to increase production on the land available while ensuring sustainable forest management and adequate responses to climate change is a **second challenge**. This requires institutions that effectively improve enabling environments for sustainable forest management and that create opportunities to generate income and employment by providing more benefits to society based on the multiple potential uses of forests.

8. Those making decisions on land use change often do not take the full range and extent of benefits of forests into account. This is aggravated by the fact that the importance of forests for local livelihoods and ecosystem services is not well understood and documented. Given that, globally, 80 percent of forests are publicly owned and a high proportion of these are officially administered by the state, the “visible” participation of communities and private individuals in forest management is still rather low. Involving local communities and other stakeholders, and sharing rights and tangible benefits of forests more broadly is one important component of mobilizing their “voice” for forests in land use decisions. More visible benefits from forests to more stakeholders increase the effectiveness of the forest sector in competing for resources with the many other issues on the policy agenda such as poverty, health, education, or agricultural development. **The third challenge** is thus how to share the benefits of forests more broadly and thereby strengthen the recognition of the role of sustainable forest management to society across social groups, gender and age, in particular vis-à-vis other land uses.

III. THE WAY FORWARD

9. Strong governance mechanisms are necessary at sub-national, national and international levels to strike the appropriate balance between conflicting needs and opportunities, address environmental challenges and implement sound natural resources governance frameworks. These need to be transparent, ensure accountability and fairness, and enhance the participation of all stakeholders in a meaningful way, especially those that are weaker in terms of social and/or political representation.

10. In order to address competing demands for food, fibre and fuel there is a particular need to pro-actively engage in bilateral dialogue with key sectors on issues of joint interest, including on more coherent integrated land-use policies. For example, food security cannot be solved by agriculture alone, but needs a coherent land use, environmental, water, energy, and rural development strategy to

be successful. Forests and trees, including agroforestry systems, can contribute to all of these aspects in a substantive way. Similarly, the production and use of biofuels from forests needs to fit into a broader strategy aiming at energy security, environmental security and overall national development, including poverty reduction.

11. Strengthening collaboration across sectors can take many forms, including entering into dialogue on concrete proposals related to a specific topic of potential joint interest. As forest issues often play a minor role in the consideration of other sectors, a proactive approach will be needed to initiate dialogue, e. g. by offering a contribution to solving issues of other sectors. This in turn requires that the needs and interests of key stakeholders of the respective sectors are understood and recognized.

12. In the global forest policy context, countries have agreed to use national forest programmes (NFPs) as comprehensive forest policy frameworks that are participatory, country-owned, and cross-sectoral, aiming at integrating forest issues into wider development goals. Over the past decade, the National Forest Programme Facility has supported more than 70 countries worldwide in implementing NFPs. This has empowered a broad range of stakeholders to participate more fully in national-level forest policy processes. The increased integration of forestry into other environmental and land use policies will be one of the focal areas of the successor “Forest & Farm Facility” (FFF), now being launched. It aims to support countries to improve their governance structures at local, national and regional levels to achieve sustainable forest landscape management whilst enhancing food security and promoting climate-smart agriculture. At local level, the FFF will support partnerships amongst smallholders, communities and indigenous peoples to enable them to make their voices heard in policy processes on forest landscape issues at all levels. At national level, it will support governments to ensure that forestry is part and parcel of new and/or existing multi-sectoral platforms.

13. The increasing conflict potential over land tenure issues needs to be managed across sectors, given that absence of tenure rights will perpetuate poverty. Not addressing insecurity of tenure rights will hold back individual investments by small holders, effectively blocking productivity gains. Many tenure problems arise because of weak governance, at the level of rules and regulations, and in managing conflicts on the ground. Addressing these is an important contribution to strengthening governance mechanisms.

14. In May 2012, FAO member countries adopted the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, which represent the first internationally negotiated UN agreement ever on tenure of land, fisheries and forests. Setting out principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices, the Voluntary Guidelines promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment. It is important that countries implement the Voluntary Guidelines across sectors to reduce conflict over land use and develop more coherent land use policies.

15. There will be many ways to address the challenge of increasing the benefits of forests while ensuring sustainable management and to broaden the range of groups in society who benefit from forests and trees. In many contexts, this will need to include ways to increase and ensure tenure rights. Having the rights to manage and benefit from forest resources and forest land provides incentives to invest, to enhance productivity and thereby improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities. Integrating concerns of women and youth is particularly important, especially in view of urbanization and changing agrarian structures.

16. Addressing climate change through appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures is one potential way to increase the benefits of forests and trees, including through climate-smart agriculture and regionally adapted agroforestry systems. Mitigating climate change through capturing carbon by growing trees at the same time can help people create more resilience as trees provide sources of energy, fibre and food.

17. Finding new ways of generating benefits from forests will require effective enabling environments for related public and private investment and innovation. This in turn requires adapting

governance frameworks, making them more conducive to innovation and cooperation by public, private and civil society organizations at all levels. It also requires enhancing and aligning capacities of forest related public administrations with their new mandates and roles to operationally lead and manage or support such changes on the ground.

18. If people are not aware of the opportunities and benefits forests and trees provide, they are not likely to stand up for the need to protect and sustainably manage them. Hence there is a need to create awareness and strengthen communication and dialogue with different groups of society, including key decision makers in other sectors. Good, convincing forest communication is essential to demonstrate the value and contribution of forests, and more capacity is needed to strengthen forest communication.

19. Regional integration organizations and dialogue fora, including Regional Forestry Commissions play an important role in fostering bilateral and broader cross-sectoral dialogue at regional levels, and in providing venues for exchanging information and experience between countries on strategic issues, including on how to strengthen governance mechanisms cost-effectively, how to increase the benefits from forests, and how to ensure that broad segments of society are aware of and effectively benefit from forests.

IV. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- The Committee may wish to invite countries to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between forestry and other key land use sectors at all levels in order to enhance effectiveness in achieving national development goals and fulfil international commitments.
- The Committee may wish to invite member countries to implement the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.
- The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to support countries in particular in:
 - strengthening governance mechanisms across land uses at national, regional and global levels, including through national forest programmes and through hosting and supporting the Forest and Farm Facility;
 - promoting integration of forest issues into key environmental and land use policies at all levels, including through supporting the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests;
 - promoting a sustainable contribution of forests to livelihoods, food and energy security, thereby strengthening the role of forests in achieving national development goals and in fulfilling international commitments;
 - strengthening inter-organizational and inter-sectoral dialogue and cooperation at regional levels promoting action towards SFM¹ in a wider land use policy context, including in the context of REDD+².
- The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to strengthen its capacity in rural land use planning in an interdisciplinary way, both in terms of normative work and project support to countries.
- The Committee may wish to invite the CPF to make strengthening cross sectoral collaboration in forestry the focus of its next analysis in the context of the Global Forest Expert Panels initiative.

¹ Sustainable Forests Management

² Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation