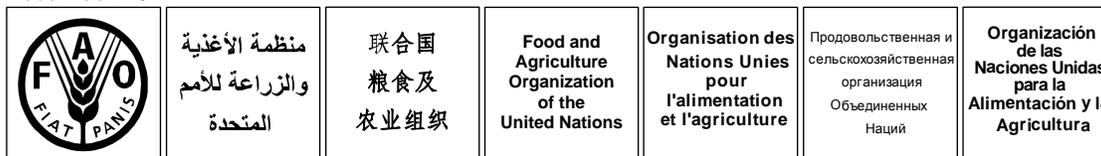


December 2012



COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda
Intergovernmental Technical Working Group On Forest Genetic Resources
Second Session
Rome, 23 - 25 January 2013
PREPARATION OF <i>THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES</i>

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), at its Twelfth Regular Session, requested FAO to prepare *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* (the Report), for consideration at its Fourteenth Regular Session, as the first authoritative assessment of forest genetic resources of importance to sustainable forest management, food security, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability.
2. The Commission, at its Thirteenth Regular Session, welcomed progress made in the preparation of the Report, supporting the participatory and integrated approach. It urged donors and relevant international organizations to make available extra-budgetary financial resources and in-kind support for the preparation of Country Reports, including for national and regional consultations; and countries to nominate National Focal Points to ensure the timely delivery of Country Reports. It stressed the need for countries to prepare and deliver their Country Reports on time based on the guidelines provided by FAO, in order for them to contribute to the Report. It agreed to move the deadline for submission of Country Reports to 1 January 2012. The Commission requested FAO to prepare a synthesis paper on priority areas for action based on Country Reports, for regional consultations. It requested the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (Working Group) to meet, prior to the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session, to review the draft version of the Report and priority areas for action, as identified in Country Reports and regional consultations; and to review and evaluate options for a follow-up, and make recommendations to the Commission.¹
3. This document reviews progress in the preparation of the Report since the Commission's last session. It presents activities undertaken and describes the current status of the Report. In the light of comments and recommendations received from the Working Group, guidance will be sought from the Commission on the process to be followed in completing the Report and on a follow-up mechanism.

II. PREPARATION OF THE REPORT

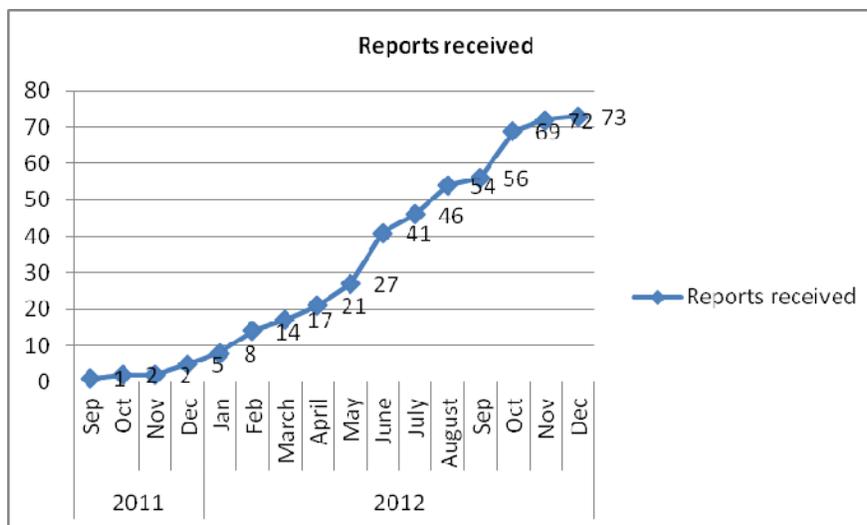
4. Since the Commission's last session, FAO's Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division has remained committed to the preparation of the Report, in collaboration with other relevant international organizations. Activities related to the preparation of the Report fall under Strategic Objective E, *Sustainable management of forests and trees*, and Strategic Objective F, *Sustainable management of land, water and genetic resources and improved responses to global environmental challenges affecting food and agriculture*, of FAO's Strategic Framework. However, the preparation of the Report draws heavily on extra-budgetary resources, which have been received from the Governments of Germany, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

Preparation of Country Reports

5. Following training workshops organized for National Focal Points, over 30 countries were provided with support in preparing their Country Reports (in the framework of country and regional TCP Facility projects). Guidelines on the preparation of Country Reports were provided. Country Report preparation was intended as an exercise in assessing the status of forest genetic resources and defining needs and priorities in terms of national and regional programmes for conservation and sustainable use of these resources. Extra-budgetary funding was not available specifically for supporting the preparation of Country Reports, but the regional consultations (see paragraph 9) did stimulate the preparation or finalization of Country Reports, although this was very late in the process (July to October 2012).

¹ CGRFA-13/11/Report, paragraphs 66-69.

6. The following figure shows the total number of Country Reports (final drafts and officially submitted reports) received during the period between September 2011 and December 2012. Only eight reports had been received by January 2012 (the submission deadline agreed by the Commission in its Thirteenth Session). This number rose to 27 in June 2012, 56 in September, 69 in October and 73 in December. The regional breakdown of these submissions is as follows: Africa 30; Asia 9; Central Asia 5; Europe 12; Latin America 4; Near East 5; North America 2; and Pacific 6. Frequent and regular contacts have been maintained with countries to encourage the finalization of their reports. A few countries were still finalizing their reports in December 2012, and were planning to submit them when ready.



Preparation of thematic background studies

7. While emphasizing the importance of Country Reports for the preparation of the Report, the Commission, at its Twelfth Regular Session, noted that, depending on the availability of resources, thematic studies could be prepared as a means of addressing issues for that are treated on a global level and for which sufficient information and knowledge was lacking.² Thematic studies, were prepared by teams of experts from national institutions and international research centres, including Bioversity International and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) on the following subjects:

- *Indicators of forest genetic diversity, erosion and vulnerability;*
- *Understanding genetic diversity of tropical species in natural forests;*
- *Role of forest genetic resources in adaptation to biotic and abiotic factors, with a focus on climate change;*
- *Forest genetic resources in decentralised management for food security, poverty reduction and livelihood improvement;*
- *Effects of management practices on forest genetic diversity;*
- *Use of native species in biodiversity restoration and management;*
- *Trends in management of forest genetic resources by the private and corporate sector.*

² CGRFA-12/09/Report, paragraph 49.

The studies will be made available as annexes to the Report. Key findings and recommendations of the studies are supporting the preparation of the Report.

Strengthening information systems

8. With in-kind support from the Canadian Forest Service, and extra-budgetary funding, FAO is upgrading the characteristics and functionalities of the existing global database on forest genetic resources (REFORGEN), to store and manage information related to the Report, in particular the data provided in the Country Reports. Information from all Country Reports will be kept and managed in the database. The new system should be operational by mid-2013, and will allow continuous, interactive access and updating of information by countries for future analysis and reporting. It will facilitate links and data exchange with existing national and regional databases on forest genetic resources.

Regional consultations to identify needs and priorities for action

9. With extra-budgetary funding, eight regional or subregional consultations were organized to share information and key findings from Country Reports and to identify needs and priorities for action:³

- **Western Africa**, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 2–6 July 2012, in collaboration with the National Forest Seed Centre (CNSF) of Burkina Faso, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, and the OECD scheme for forest reproductive material.
- **North Africa and the Near East**, held in Tabarka, Tunisia, 16–18 July 2012, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of Tunisia.
- **Central Asia**, held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 27–29 August 2012, in collaboration with the Tajik Forest Research Institute.
- **Pacific**, held in Nadi, Fiji, 4–6 September 2012, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.
- **Central Africa**, held in Libreville, Gabon, 7–8 September 2012, in collaboration with the Forestry Commission of Central Africa (COMIFAC).
- **Asia**, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 12–14 September 2012, in collaboration with the Asia–Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) and Bioversity International.
- **Eastern and Southern Africa**, held in Nairobi, Kenya, 17–19 September 2012, in collaboration with the Kenyan Forest Research Institute.
- **Latin America**, held in Santiago, Chile, 15–17 October 2012, in collaboration with the Latin American Forest Genetic Resources Network (LAFORGEN) and Bioversity International.

Analysis of information and preparation of the Report

10. The delay in submission of Country Reports has created difficulties in the preparation of the Report. Although FAO initiated the preparation of the Report as soon as a reasonable number of Country Reports had been received from different regions, the continuous flow of new information from Country Reports submitted throughout the year has made the finalization of the text impossible. The information from the Country Reports is still being analysed and integrated into the draft as the reports become available. As a result of this difficulty, it will be impossible for the Working Group to review the draft Report. Key findings of the Report will be presented during the meeting for review by the Working Group.

³ Results of the consultations are presented in Document CGRFA/WG-FGR/2/13/3.

While the substance and key findings of the Report are well defined, additional work is needed to fully finalize it. This can be achieved within the year 2013, given the momentum and support that have been established among the countries and partners involved in the process, who are committed to producing a good document to serve as a baseline for monitoring the world's forest genetic resources and the impact of measures taken to support their conservation and sustainable use. The following table provides information on the status of preparation of the various chapters of the Report and the schedule for its finalization.

	Phase 1 Information collected ⁴	Phase 2 Information analyzed	Phase 3 First draft prepared	Phase 4 Draft reviewed internally	Phase 5 External review completed	Phase 6 Chief editing completed	Phase 7 Ready to print
Status (Dec.12)/ Schedule	Done	Ongoing	Ongoing	1 Feb 13	1 Apr 13	1 June 13	1 Sep 13

Positive impact of the process on national programmes and regional cooperation on forest genetic resources

11. In many countries, the preparation of Country Reports created an opportunity to engage and stimulate the interests of a wide range of stakeholders and involve them in a strategic planning exercise on forest genetic resources. In several cases, it also contributed a better understanding of issues and needs related to the assessment and sustainable management of forest genetic resources. Identification of gaps, needs and priorities at national and regional levels has been discussed, and possible efforts to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of national forest genetic resources have been analysed.
12. At regional level, consultation activities have been organized in collaboration with regional or subregional institutions to facilitate integration of the recommendations within relevant regional and subregional strategies and programmes.
13. The whole process of preparing the Report seems to have significantly contributed to increasing the awareness of the importance of appropriate policies and actions promoting better understanding and sustainable management of forest genetic resources. As a result, in many countries forest genetic resources concerns are now better understood and better integrated into broader national policies and programmes.

III. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

14. The Working Group may wish to:
- a. Review and revise, as necessary, the key findings of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*;
 - b. Provide advice on the finalization of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*; and
 - c. Request FAO to present a draft of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* to the Commission, for its consideration, at its Fourteenth Regular Session.

⁴ Information from Country Reports submitted by 31 December 2012 will be taken into consideration.