



## FAO FORESTRY

### COFO 2009/World Forest Week

"Forests in a changing world" was the overall theme of the nineteenth session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 16 to 20 March 2009. Under the banner of the first World Forest Week, the biennial forestry meeting of FAO member countries was expanded to welcome the participation of many partner organizations. The event attracted over 550 participants.

The keynote speaker was Gro Harlem Brundtland, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Climate Change, formerly Prime Minister of Norway and head of the World Commission on Environment and Development (best known for developing the broad political concept of sustainable development, published in the 1987 report *Our common future*). In her address, Brundtland called for mutually supportive forest and climate change policies and emphasized the imperative of including forests in a post-Kyoto Protocol climate agreement, noting that reducing deforestation and forest degradation would be the most cost-effective way to address climate change. She underlined, however, that the future agreement must also safeguard the rights of forest-dependent people.

Sustainable forest management in relation to climate change was one of the two main topics addressed at COFO. Presentations noted that climate change concerns raise potential for financing forest management activities – particularly through the inclusion of a mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD) in the post-2012 climate change agreement. Delegates emphasized that any REDD arrangement must take into account the range of values forests provide.

The discussions underscored the linkages between sustainable forest management and REDD, and stressed that to adapt to and mitigate climate change, sufficient financial resources must be devoted to sustainable forest management. The joint climate change strategy presented by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) (see *Unasylva* 231/232, p. 87) underlined the need for the forestry community to present a united front to ensure that sustainable forest management is included in the prospective climate agreement.

The second main theme at COFO was institutional change in a dynamic world. The discussions focused on how public sector



**Gro Harlem Brundtland delivers keynote speech at the nineteenth session of the FAO Committee on Forestry, 17 March 2009**



**A giant chair donated by Federlegno, the Italian Wood Industry Federation, towers over the COFO exhibit in the FAO atrium – a reminder that using wood is good**

forestry agencies need to adapt to economic, political, social, environmental and technological changes at all levels, so as to become more responsive to society's needs and more efficient in delivery of economic and environmental services.

In parallel to sessions presenting official COFO agenda items, approximately 20 special World Forest Week events were held to enable greater participation by intergovernmental organizations and more informal, off-the-record discussion among countries. Topics included, among others, the future of public forestry research; new perspectives in forestry education; fire and climate change; forest adaptation to climate change; and access to financing for sustainable forest management. Featured speakers included leaders and representatives of many CPF partner organizations.

One of the special events was a dialogue among heads of forestry departments, which gave participants an opportunity to discuss the challenges they face – such as budget constraints; changing societal and stakeholder expectations, needs and activities; shifting government priorities and structures; and environmental stresses such as climate change, fires, pathogens and pests – and to share innovations for dealing with them, including creative funding processes and partnerships with the private sector.

Finally, a special session addressed the impacts of global economic turbulence on the forest sector. Panelists raised concerns that the global economic downturn would be likely to lead to reductions in investment and wood supply, job losses and overexploitation of forest resources for subsistence. However a main thrust of the session was to highlight the role that sustainable forest management can play in responding to the crisis. The central message was that investment in forestry could not only create millions of jobs, but would address climate change at the same time. This session provided the basis for many of the articles in this issue of *Unasylva*.



## FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry endorsed

At its nineteenth session, the Committee on Forestry (COFO) endorsed the new FAO Strategy for Forests and Forestry, which was developed through a consultative process as requested by the eighteenth session of the committee in 2007.

The new strategy is aligned with ongoing reforms in FAO, and in particular with the new framework of results-based management adopted by the Organization in accord with the recommendations of an Independent External Evaluation carried out from 2005 to 2008. The FAO reforms are being implemented through an Immediate Plan of Action adopted in November 2008.

The new strategy for forests outlines three global goals for society as a whole. Paraphrased, these include:

- informed, coordinated, transparent and participatory decision-making across sectors, based on timely and accurate information;
- increased contribution of trees, forests and forestry to livelihoods, poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable supply of raw materials and energy, and increased recognition of these benefits;
- good forest management practices, leading to increased forest resources and thus a greater contribution of forests and trees to mitigating climate change, combating desertification, conserving biodiversity and ensuring water quality – as well as increased recognition of these ecosystem services.

The strategy identifies nine core functions of FAO in forestry:

- providing long-term perspectives and leadership in monitoring and assessing trends in forest resources and services, and the production, consumption and trade of forest products;
- generating, disseminating and applying information and knowledge, including statistics.
- leading the development of voluntary guidelines, supporting the development of national legal instruments, and promoting their implementation;
- articulating policy and strategy options and advice to improve the social, economic, and environmental aspects of forest development and conservation;
- providing technical support to promote technology transfer, catalyse change and build effective and sustainable institutional capacity for sustainable forest management;
- undertaking advocacy and communication to mobilize political will and to promote global recognition of required actions to achieve sustainable forest management;
- bringing integrated interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to bear on work in the forest sector and in other key sectors that have an impact on forests;
- working through strong partnerships and alliances where joint action is needed;
- facilitating linkages between national, regional and global levels.

### Focus on results

At the Conference of FAO in November 2008, member countries approved in principle a revised strategic framework based on 11 strategic objectives for the Organization as a whole; these include one forestry-specific objective: "Sustainable management of forests and trees". The FAO Draft Strategic Framework 2010–2019 identifies six main organizational results directed towards meeting this objective:

- Policy and practice affecting forests and forestry are based on timely and reliable information.
- Policy and practice affecting forests and forestry are reinforced by international cooperation and debate.
- Institutions governing forests are strengthened and decision-making improved, including involvement of forest stakeholders in the development of forest policies and legislation, thereby enhancing an enabling environment for investment in forestry and forest industries. Forestry is better integrated into national development plans and processes, considering interfaces between forests and other land uses.
- Sustainable management of forests and trees is more broadly adopted, leading to reductions in deforestation and forest degradation and increased contributions of forests and trees to improve livelihoods and to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Social and economic values and livelihood benefits of forests and trees are enhanced, and markets for forest products and services contribute to making forestry a more economically viable land-use option.
- Environmental values of forests, trees outside forests and forestry are better realized; strategies for conservation of forest biodiversity and genetic resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation, rehabilitation of degraded lands, and water and wildlife management are effectively implemented.

These results cannot be achieved by FAO alone, but FAO can make a significant contribution. For each result, the strategy identifies priorities to guide FAO during the period 2010–2013. Specific outcomes and indicators are being developed under the the FAO Medium-Term Plan, and progress will be monitored and reported to FAO governing bodies, including COFO.



### Industry committee ponders impacts of financial crisis

The global economic decline was high on the agenda when the Advisory Committee on Paper and Wood Products (ACPWP), one of FAO's statutory bodies in forestry, met at FAO headquarters in Rome for its fiftieth session on 26 May 2009.

The committee, comprising senior executives from the private industry sector worldwide, meets yearly to provide guidance to FAO on issues relevant to the paper and forest products industry, in support of member countries' efforts to progress towards sustainable development.

Country reports prepared by ACPWP members highlighted emerging issues and business developments over the preceding year. The main emerging issues were identified as climate change; potential market imbalances due to emission trading schemes; water supply and quality; certification issues, including the difficulty of certifying smallholdings; the energy market; and corporate social responsibility.

The most important business development identified in the country reports was without question the precarious economic situation, which had resulted in difficulties in obtaining loans, loss of retail sales and consumer confidence and decreased advertising expenditures. Lower production costs and raw material prices were seen to provide relief, but lower freight rates were exacerbating competition. The committee noted that the exceptionally uncertain economic situation calls for a rapid ability to adjust, as well as for measures to improve productivity and competitiveness. As export demand wanes, cost competitiveness becomes increasingly important.

The session that focused on the impacts of the financial crisis on the forest industry also looked at some ways out of the crisis, with particular attention to green building and to closer integration of biofuels and green chemicals with forest industries. Increased building with wood and substitution of wood for non-renewable building materials were perceived as a potential basis for a renaissance in sawmilling and woodworking industries, for example, especially in Europe. Some of the leading international forest corporations have announced intentions to integrate biofuel production in pulp mill processes. Biorefinery technologies being pursued include production of biodiesel, bioethanol and heavy fuel oils from forest residual biomass such as bark, stumps and branches; and synthesis and purification of gas from wood. In terms of the more traditional wood energy market, the downturn in wood prices bodes well for wood pellet manufacturing.

Another session addressed the need for industry to work together to communicate positive messages and reverse public misperceptions about wood and wood industries.

The committee also reviewed industry-relevant developments related to forests and climate change, and avenues for engagement of forest industry in ongoing climate change negotiations.

The day before the ACPWP meeting, FAO also hosted the annual meeting of the International Council of Forest and Paper Associations (ICFPA).

For more information about ACPWP, see: [www.fao.org/forestry/51819](http://www.fao.org/forestry/51819)

### Forest tenure, governance and enterprise in Central and West Africa

In Central and West Africa, as in many regions, weak governance and insecure tenure rights often undermine the contributions of forestry to local, national and regional livelihoods and economies, and to the health of the environment. Clarification and recognition of tenure rights can open up opportunities for forest communities to invest in and enhance the sustainable use of forests.

At the International Conference on Community Forest Management and Enterprise, held in Brazil in 2007, African participants called for a follow-up conference to chart a time-bound plan for systematically expanding community forest tenure, management and enterprise in Africa to agreed, achievable targets by 2015. To this end, the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife of Cameroon hosted the conference Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise: New Opportunities for Livelihoods and Wealth in Central and West Africa, from 25 to 29 May in Yaounde, Cameroon. The objective of the conference was to catalyse new and wider-ranging actions by governments and civil society organizations towards more secure land and forest tenure in the region.

The meeting was organized by FAO, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Intercooperation, the Global Alliance of Community Forestry (GACF) and the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC). It attracted close to 250 participants from all regions.

The conference comprised nine sessions addressing:

- current status of tenure and emerging lessons from ongoing reform;
- tenure reform – experiences and lessons from other countries (with positive examples from Brazil, China, Guatemala, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, the United Republic of Tanzania);
- the role and perspectives of forest communities in the forest reform process;
- tools and strategies for recognizing and mapping rights;
- the role of tenure and governance in climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- experiences with conventional and alternative tenure and wood-based enterprises;
- experience with extraction and management of non-wood forest products;



- reforming land tenure – how to ensure effective reforms and implementation;
- next steps to accelerate reforms in Central and West Africa.

The conference concluded with agreement on a time-bound set of activities for implementation by governments and social actors, the “Objective 2015”. These activities include:

- prioritizing forest tenure reform as a national development issue in all African countries by 2015;
- reversing the assumption that all lands are State owned;
- recognizing the human rights of all ethnic and minority peoples by 2015, including their rights to land and access to resources;
- empowering communities to claim their rights by expanding participatory mapping of community land rights before development of land use plans and zoning;
- setting ambitious targets for community ownership of forest lands (e.g. a percentage to be reached by 2015) through multistakeholder processes, and developing strategies and plans to achieve those targets;
- addressing constraints to community and small-scale enterprises, markets and trade, to aim towards at least quadrupling community incomes from all forest operations by 2015;
- strengthening political will and action to advance forest tenure reforms;
- setting up mechanisms for monitoring and following up on the Objective 2015.

Further information about the conference is available at: [www.itto.int/en/workshop\\_detail/id=44270000](http://www.itto.int/en/workshop_detail/id=44270000)

### Moving ahead with community-based fire management

Every year fires affect an estimated 350 million hectares of land, with damage to property, natural resources and livelihoods, and frequently with loss of life. Uncontrolled vegetation fires also contribute to global warming, air pollution, desertification and loss of biodiversity. Developing countries are often the most susceptible.

Fire management cannot be fully shouldered by government agencies or communities alone. FAO therefore promotes community-based fire management (CBFiM) – an approach in which a local community (with or without the collaboration of other stakeholders) has substantial involvement in deciding the objectives and practices involved in preventing, controlling or using fires. CBFiM can be especially effective in those places where ignition by humans is the primary cause of wildfires. Over the past five years, FAO and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have been jointly preparing and presenting training programmes and workshops to disseminate the approach.

In March 2009, for example, FAO, TNC and the China State Forestry Administration held a workshop in Xishungbanna,

Yunnan Province (southwestern China) to promote CBFiM in China and elsewhere in Asia, via the use of local and global examples. In Asia the frequency and intensity of fires, and the severity of pollution problems from the associated smoke and haze, has increased over the past 30 years. In China, forest fires are largest and most numerous in remote, highly forested regions of Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, Yunnan, Guangxi and Guizhou, where climates are extreme (including extreme wind events) and both access and fire prevention and control facilities are limited. At the workshop, forest fire scientists, managers, policy-makers and non-governmental organizations from Northeast Asia sought viable fire management options for their particular socio-cultural, environmental and geographic conditions.

CBFiM is based on the following principles, which have been developed since 2001 by Project FireFight South East Asia (an initiative of the World Wide Fund for Nature [WWF] and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature [IUCN]) together with FAO, the Global Fire Monitoring Center and German, Thai and United States government agencies; the principles have been tested in tropical, temperate and savannah environments. Fire management:

- should focus on people, not on equipment or legal constructs;
- requires a sense of ownership, without which people’s motivation to participate will be eroded;
- can be adapted to use local and indigenous knowledge, taking caution to ensure that the adaptations can fit within a rapidly evolving environment;
- benefits from communities’ tendency to focus on prevention over suppression;
- draws on the strengths of and balance between community members and government agencies.

For more information about CBFiM, see: [www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement](http://www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement)

Publications on CBFiM can be viewed at: [www.fao.org/forestry/35893](http://www.fao.org/forestry/35893)

### Ken King, 1929–2008

FAO has recently learned of the death of Ken King, Assistant Director-General of the FAO Forestry Department from 1974 to 1978, on 30 July 2008 in Georgetown, Guyana.

Kenneth Fitzgerald Stanislaus King was born in Georgetown, Guyana (then British Guiana) on 22 August 1929. After completing his secondary education he began his career as a Forestry Officer in the Guyana Forest Department, but resigned to continue his education in the United Kingdom. He gained a forestry degree at Bangor University, Wales, and a law degree from London University, both in the same year (1956). In 1963 he obtained a doctoral degree in forestry economics from the University of Oxford with a thesis on land use in the tropics.



King joined FAO in 1964, working first on a project in Nigeria to help establish a forestry faculty at the University of Ibadan. In 1968 he became Chief of the Development Planning Section in the Forestry and Forest Products Division at FAO headquarters in Rome. In 1970, he became Forestry and Land Use Officer in the FAO/World Bank Cooperative Programme. In 1972, King returned to Guyana to serve in his country's government, as Vice-Chairman of the Guyana State Corporation (GUYSTAC), an umbrella organization overseeing public enterprises, and then as Minister of Economic Development.

However, frustrated by difficulties in implementing the national development plan, whose preparation he had led, King returned to FAO in 1974, this time as Assistant Director-General in charge of the Forestry Department. During his tenure in this position, the department added programmes oriented towards meeting the

needs of rural populations, materially strengthening the community forestry component of its work.

In 1978, he left FAO to become the first Director-General of the International Council for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) (now the World Agroforestry Centre) in Nairobi, Kenya. This position was followed by an appointment as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Representative in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In 1991, he returned to Guyana, occupying in the years that followed a number of ministerial and political leadership positions. From 2002 to 2004, he was his country's Ambassador to Belgium and Permanent Representative to the European Union. But while in Belgium his health deteriorated; he resigned his post to undergo treatment in Saint Lucia.

Ken King's wife Joyce had died in 2005. They are survived by a son and a daughter.