



ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

NINTH MEETING OF THE APFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 3 May 2013

SUMMARY OF 21ST SESSION OF COFO AND 8TH MEETING OF APFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This document summarizes proceedings and outcomes of the 21st session of COFO and the 9th Meeting of the APFC Executive Committee.

a) 21st Session of FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO)

1. The FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO) is the highest FAO Forestry statutory body and brings together heads of forestry agencies and other senior government officials to identify emerging policy and technical issues, to seek solutions, and to advise FAO and others on appropriate strategies and actions. Participation in COFO is open to all FAO member countries.
2. The twenty-first session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Third World Forest Week were convened concurrently 24 – 28 October 2012, in Rome, Italy. The events were well attended, with more than 600 registered participants from 120 countries.
3. The meeting addressed a number of issues related to the state of the world's forests; translating the outcome of Rio+20 into action; strengthening forestry's cross-sectoral linkages; land use policies and rural development actions, improved financing for forest products and enhancing knowledge and information.
4. The Committee welcomed the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.
5. The Committee reviewed reports on the International Year of Forests (2011), forest and rangeland activities in the Near East, and FAO's strategic role in forestry.
6. The meeting adopted the multi-year programme of work for COFO 2012-2015, considered enhanced action on vegetation fires and long term resource mobilization, and established priorities to guide FAO's work on forestry.
7. The meeting reviewed FAO's strategic objectives, in particular strategic objective two, on "ensuring enabling policy and regulatory frameworks for food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry", and requested that forests be better integrated into all strategic objectives.
8. The Third World Forest Week took place in parallel to COFO 21, allowing for informal discussions and brainstorming on major issues, lessons learned and the way forward. There were 56

seminars, technical sessions, panel discussions, “share fair” events, briefings, information sessions, etc. held during the week.

b) Recommendations from the 21st Session of COFO

Among the recommendations made by COFO 21, of particular relevance for Asia and the Pacific, were the following:

1. Support countries in enhancing the contribution of forests and forest products to economic development, including establishing an enabling environment for small forest-based enterprises, broadening the range of forest products, and educating the public on the benefits of forest products.
2. Seek ways to maximize forests’ contribution to greening the economy; work on cross-sectoral communication and collaboration; and further develop the content of the sustainable forest management (SFM) toolbox to support countries in implementing sustainable forest management.
3. Support countries in:
 - i. promoting the important role of forests in maintaining the productivity of agriculture and natural resources, enhancing forestry and agriculture linkages across sectors, and strengthening policies and agencies to improve food security;
 - ii. achieving development goals for wood energy, especially in relation to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of targeted and holistic wood energy policies, compiling reliable data and information on woodfuel production and consumption, and facilitating technology transfer and training on wood energy;
 - iii. strengthening governance mechanisms and integrating forest issues into key environmental and land use policies at all levels, including through implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests* and by hosting and supporting the Forest and Farm Facility;
 - iv. strengthening cooperation at regional levels to promote sustainable forest management.
4. Promote the sustainable management of trees and forests through an integrated approach across the landscape (including more cross-cutting and inter-departmental work within FAO), including by collecting and documenting cases of effective integrated natural resources management.
5. Cooperate with partners, including through the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, to support action towards achieving the Bonn challenge, targeting the restoration of at least 150 million hectares of degraded forest lands by 2020.
6. Support national efforts to strengthen the financial basis for sustainable forest management, including by developing an enabling environment for investment in the sector, demonstrating the multiple values and benefits arising from public and private investment in sustainable forest management, introducing new revenue streams, and more effectively accessing international financial mechanisms.
7. Increase support to the development of improved tools and mechanisms for enhanced financing of the forestry and rangelands programme(s) in member countries in the Near-East Region, including South-South cooperation.
8. Implement the Global Forest Resources Assessment Long-Term Strategy and prepare a set of voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring.

9. Strengthen the FAO fire management programme, propose a coordination mechanism among UN agencies and programmes, and develop a set of international guidance tools for managing wildfire-related risks at the landscape level.
10. Take into account the recommendations of the strategic evaluation of FAO's forestry programs and activities.
11. Explore opportunities for greater cooperation among the FAO Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
12. Provide information to member countries outlining the intended steps for strategic planning over the next nine months and clarify how work on forests will be budgeted (the Committee emphasized the need for an adequate forestry budget in FAO under the emerging strategic planning process).
13. Implement the recommendations of the Regional Forestry Commissions (RFCs), making full use of inputs from the regions to identify synergies and ensure a strategic approach to forestry work.

c) Eighth Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission Executive Committee

1. The Eighth Meeting of the APFC Executive Committee was held on 25 September 2012 at FAO HQ, Rome, Italy, in conjunction with the 21st session of COFO.
 2. The meeting reviewed FAO and APFC activities in the Asia-Pacific region since the 24th session of APFC in Beijing, and discussed preliminary arrangements for the 25th session to be convened in New Zealand in November.
 3. New Zealand delegate made a presentation on the early preparations for the 25th Session of APFC and options for various arrangements were discussed.
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