



WFC2015
XIV World Forestry Congress

Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future

7-11 SEPTEMBER 2015 Durban | South Africa

Action points for forests and forestry

This document presents the “action points” arising from the High-level Dialogue, plenary sessions, sub-theme processes and special events that took place during the XIV World Forestry Congress in Durban, South Africa, in September 2015. The action points were presented and discussed at a plenary session of the Congress, and participants were invited to submit additional comments by email. This document takes into account all comments received as part of this process. The XIV World Forestry Congress produced three outcome documents, which are available at <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/world-forestry-congress>. The action points listed here are complementary to, and helped inform, those documents.

High-level Dialogue

- 14 Ministers and high-level officials participated
- Forests have a role in major global challenges, such as food security and biodiversity loss
- Points raised included the following:
 - o Better integration between forestry and related land-use policies
 - o More collaboration in scaling up from pilot projects to landscapes
 - o Importance of forests for climate-change mitigation and adaptation
 - o Contribution of forests to many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
 - o Significance of forests for the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities and for biodiversity and environmental services
 - o Clear calls to promote effective stakeholder and civil-society engagement, gender equality, good governance and secure land tenure
 - o Urgent need for more effective investments, with adequate financial resources for:
 - capacity building, especially at the community level;
 - research, product innovation and technology transfer;
 - micro-enterprise development;
 - forest education; and
 - creating employment opportunities, especially for young people.
- Forests can be part of a transformative change towards a bio-based economy, especially in the increased use of wood, in the construction and building sector, and through innovation.



- National forest programmes can serve as useful platforms at the national level to articulate how forests can best contribute to a bio-based economy, meeting climate-change commitments, and implementing the SDGs.

Subtheme 1: Forests for Socioeconomic Development and Food Security

- Indigenous peoples, local communities, family smallholders, women, men, young and old, and their organizations, already manage a third of the world's forests. They are also major investors and landscape custodians, and they and their forests play critical roles in ensuring food security and nutrition, local livelihoods, responding to climate change, and meeting the SDGs.
- Indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders have the potential to do much more. But to ensure they play a greater part in solutions to local and global challenges, serious and renewed actions are needed to secure their tenure rights, strengthen their organizations, improve services, provide fair access to markets, and increase finance and investments at all levels.
- All key actors, including governments and development agencies, should invest significantly in resources (human, material, financial) to further develop processes for recognizing and formalizing rights in community-based forest management.
- We urge governments and non-government actors to directly consult with indigenous peoples, local communities, family smallholders and their organizations and engage as equal partners in prioritizing, developing, implementing and monitoring forest-related policies and programmes that meet their needs and demands.
- Governments and key actors should invest in participatory processes and mechanisms, either by prioritizing and using existing ones or by developing and establishing effective new mechanisms. Government, the private sector and development agencies should also invest directly in local communities so they can develop enterprises and access markets, and in capacity building on SFM based on the needs of local communities.
- Indigenous peoples, local communities, family smallholders have the numbers and the knowledge and are vital for the future of the world's forests.

Subtheme 2: Building Resilience with Forests

- Resilience needs to be a part of forest/land management, from planning through implementation, taking into consideration the potential risks, impacts and shocks from natural and human-made disasters and crises.
- The role of trees and forests in ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction needs more attention.

- Sound phytosanitary measures are critical for reducing the impact of pests and pathogens in the trade in non-native tree/plant species and to enhance forest resilience in post-2015 development plans.
- Native species can become invasive beyond their natural ranges. Considerable international work has been done to mitigate the risk of invasive species and should be continued.
- Integrated fire management is an essential tool for building resilience in forests.
- Genetic diversity in, and the ecological integrity of, forests must be maintained and enhanced through sustainable land management practices.
- National policies and incentives to protect and improve forests and green infrastructure in and near cities can sustain environmental services critical for building resilience in urban areas, where most of the world's population resides.

Subtheme 3: Integrating Forests and Other Land Uses

- Intensify efforts to integrate forests and other land uses to achieve sustainable landscapes and livelihoods by:
 - o establishing mechanisms for effective integrated and cross-sectoral land-use planning;
 - o applying the landscape approach and adaptive management on the ground;
 - o maintaining effective multistakeholder platforms; and
 - o better linking research to policy.
- Improve agriculture–forestry linkages and synergies in the landscape to enhance food security and nutrition, alleviate poverty and conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services by:
 - o implementing integrated landscape management to optimize the roles of agriculture, forests and other land uses and to maximize the synergies among them;
 - o enabling indigenous peoples, local communities and family smallholders to realize their potential contributions by providing them with secure land tenure and access to forest resources, and access to markets, inputs and technologies; and
 - o encouraging voluntary corporate efforts to decouple deforestation from commodity production.
- Bring forest and landscape restoration (FLR) to scale through coordinated efforts and active collaboration among key actors, including:
 - o the public sector to provide stable and enabling legal and institutional frameworks, investment and policy support that will help catalyse private-sector and community investment in FLR; and
 - o the private sector to build social and environmental benefits into their business plans for FLR and to engage smallholder farmers and rural communities as partners and beneficiaries of restoration activities.
- The public and private sectors and civil society take collective action to apply five principles in guiding the present and future establishment and management of planted forests: 1) good governance; 2) corporate responsibility; 3) equitable sharing of costs and benefits; 4) adoption of a landscape approach; and 5) sustainability across scales.

Subtheme 4: Encouraging Product Innovation and Sustainable Trade

- Create awareness and improve the image of sustainable intensification of forestry through improved forest management and responsible use of biotechnology.
- Improve access to finance, materials and knowledge among aspiring tree-growers to empower them as entrepreneurs, contractors, out-growers and participants in value chains in locally controlled and managed forests.
- Demonstrate the full potential of legal and sustainable wood in construction and related uses for resolving housing challenges and improving the quality of lives among increasingly urban populations in developing countries.
- Continually improve the quality of timber in, and use of, engineered wood products to enhance access to housing in both developing and developed countries.
- Advocate for greater inclusion of forest product value chains in the concept of bio-economy, and strengthen their multiple values for society through resource and energy efficiency, renewability and recyclability.
- Help local operators access knowledge and financing for investments in alternative, value-added uses of biomass.
- Create enabling conditions and support small-scale producers so they can benefit from schemes, such as certification, that enable consumers to support sustainable forest management through their purchases.
- Provide access to finance for, disseminate knowledge on, and transfer new and non-conventional technologies on agreed-upon terms for more diversified uses of biomass.
- Support countries in reforming and governing land tenure with local empowerment, participation and organization, as a precursor to investment.
- Deploy international cooperation, multistakeholder dialogue and appropriate governance frameworks to guide research priorities, address societal concerns over new technologies, and enable the flow of innovations to reach those who need them the most.

Subtheme 5: Monitoring Forests for Better Decision-making

- Forest inventory is evolving continuously in many countries, with major changes in methods and purposes. No single method or approach fits every set of circumstances, so locally relevant consultation, design and implementation is essential. The value of community-based monitoring needs to be recognized.
- Modern methods can reduce the cost of monitoring and speed the delivery time for results. For example, data collection quality is greatly improved by using data recorders rather than paper plot records.
- Producing results and ensuring they are used are often not connected – too little effort is made in connecting information use with decision-making. Initial designs should include plans for ensuring the dissemination and use of results.

- Ground-based inventory that incorporates remote sensing for inventory design, forest health, stratification and other uses is increasingly used as a standard.
- Greater transparency is needed in remote sensing datasets, including the reporting of errors and uncertainties, and efforts are needed to make such datasets publicly available.

Subtheme 6: Improving Governance by Building Capacity

- Integrated and sustainable resource management requires adequate governance arrangements across sectors and scales. This can be achieved through informed political leadership, inclusive decision-making and improved intersectoral capacity for collaboration.
- To achieve the SDGs, investment is needed in institutional arrangements that engage and involve stakeholders in decision-making at all levels and that mobilize action by aligning goals, incentives and regulations and by strengthening ownership and accountability.
- To improve governance, public forestry institutions need competencies in ethical leadership, transparent information management, and facilitation of decision-making processes. Adequate incentives are also required to promote behaviours and attitudes consistent with good governance.
- There are now many examples of best practice in communicating the importance of forests. Resources are needed to develop forest communication approaches to help decision-makers and the wider public understand forests, recognize their many benefits, and support the forest community in its work to safeguard those benefits for future generations.

International Forest and Water Dialogue

- The interactions between trees, forests and water and the roles these play in addressing critical issues such as food security, access to quality water (including in urban areas), climate change and landscape resilience deserve greater recognition at the national, regional and international levels.
- Dialogue participants have a strong demand and need for, and a willingness to participate in and contribute to, a newly established network that will consolidate, synthesize and share knowledge, best practices and common methodologies as well as build the capacity of scientists, practitioners and policymakers on the interactions between forests and water.
- More resources are needed for research on forest–water interactions, and this research needs to be translated into policy action and practical implementation, including at the community level.

Africa Day

- Key message 1: Multisectoral integrated approaches of sustainable management of forest resources:
 - o adequate harmonization of policies, institutional mandates, forest law enforcement and governance arrangements;
 - o integrating traditional forest management knowledge and practices with scientific approaches, including the participation of local communities in forest management and utilization; and
 - o ensuring that Africa remains on the path of sustainable development by tackling the challenges posed by climate change, loss of biodiversity, and desertification – especially for rural populations, farmers, youth and women – by implementing the principles of sustainable forest management.
- Key message 2: Technological innovations and strengthening in the forest sector:
 - o recommended innovation and technology development as critical elements for enhancing the forest sector’s contribution to economic development and providing decent employment, especially for rural communities, women and youth; and
 - o urged more investment in capacity building, particularly at the technical and vocational levels.
- Key message 3: Investment and financing for sustainable forest management:
 - o underscored the need for African governments to increase investment and incentives in the development of the forest sector;
 - o encouraged development of partnerships between governments, the private sector, local communities, civil society, research and academia, as well as international institutions such as FAO, UNEP and UNESCO, to effectively respond to current and emerging demands on the forest sector and to implement Agenda 2063 as well as the SDGs; and
 - o recommended development of regional guidelines to facilitate access and benefit-sharing to boost trade in wood and non-wood forest products, expand market infrastructure, technology application, and enable adequate financing among Africa’s forest stakeholders at all levels.

More than Heat! Wood Energy for the Future

- Wood energy is not “the poor man’s fuel”. It is a renewable, climate-friendly and available form of energy when produced sustainably and used efficiently.
- Wood is a high-value product, and woodfuel may not always be the highest value-added end use. In some circumstances, however, it may be the best option for energy production.
- A comprehensive approach addressing the full value chain for fuelwood and charcoal as well as governance issues is needed to improve sustainability and efficiency, especially for charcoal production and trade.
- Special attention needs to be paid to women and children, who bear most of the burden of woodfuel collection and use, including by reducing the health risks.

- As countries embark on a sustainable development path in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, wood energy should be considered as a viable, renewable alternative to fossil fuels for a wide range of industrial purposes in industrialized as well as developing countries.
- In sub-Saharan African countries, where a large proportion of the population relies on wood energy, enhancing the sustainability and efficiency of woodfuel production and consumption should be a priority for development policies and strategies.

Wildlife Forum

- The sustainable management of wildlife is an important part of integrated approaches to the multipurpose use of natural resources and can play a meaningful role in addressing the SDGs. Done sustainably, wildlife management can provide benefits for food security, livelihoods, natural heritage, and biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.
- Multidisciplinary approaches with strong community participation are needed to combine knowledge on the sustainable use and trade of wild meat and other non-wood forest products, strengthen legal frameworks and health protocols, and promote law compliance, multisectoral collaboration, innovative market approaches, and best practices. Foresters should be encouraged to ensure that sustainable forest management takes wildlife and non-wood forest products fully into consideration.
- The role of indigenous and local communities in wildlife management is essential and must be strengthened through participatory approaches, including in wildlife monitoring and the eradication of poaching and wildlife crime.
- It is possible to sustainably harvest wild meat and other non-wood forest products, and this is compatible with conservation, improved livelihoods, food security and nutrition. Better understanding of the causes and consequences of human–wildlife conflicts, including analyses of local situations, is needed in order to create models for mitigating conflicts and increasing the tolerance of indigenous and local communities towards co-existence with wildlife.
- Combating the illegal trade in wildlife requires:
 - o a coordinated effort at all levels, treating such crimes as serious crimes, and deploying the same tools and techniques used to combat other serious crimes;
 - o the involvement of indigenous and local communities, recognizing that basic levels of security must first be in place for communities to benefit from the legal use of wildlife;
 - o stronger interagency and cross-border collaboration; and
 - o the deployment of novel and innovative approaches and tools for the monitoring of wildlife populations, use and trade, including new identification and traceability tools.

Youth: Our Vision – Commitment for Change

- Youth as a collective envisions forests as resources that are managed in ways that enable continuous provision for the needs of current and future generations. We see forests that:
 - o are managed based on multistakeholder engagement and acceptance;
 - o serve people – provision of food, water, shelter, energy and employment;
 - o are maintained as a spring of inspiration, spirituality and culture; and
 - o protect nature and the climate, and ultimately sustain life.
- By **respecting different perspectives, beliefs and cultures** and bringing people together rather than setting them apart:
 - o framing actionable policies at all levels;
 - o implementing policies at the local, national and global levels;
 - o actively engaging in our communities;
 - o breaking barriers and contributing to integrated solutions across sectors, regions and generations;
 - o partnerships and alliances for a green economy; and
 - o leading change today for tomorrow.
- We urge decision-makers to provide:
 - o investment in **innovative education** for developing skills, including
 - social and intercultural awareness
 - communication
 - practical capacity building
 - critical thinking; and
 - o platforms for the **meaningful engagement** of young people and social equity in local/national/global decision-making processes.

Additional actionable points submitted by participants in the Youth Forum:

- Let us, the youth, be outcomes and results orientated. Let all youth who attend World Forestry Congresses go with the idea that they are going to actively band together to deliver a project. Let's propel the youth to have a single, simple, medium-to-large project that is shared, no matter which part of the world they reside in. This will provide a platform for progress from theoretical discussions to quantifiable project outcomes.
- Young people should be meaningfully engaged in forestry platforms (e.g programme implementation, policy formulation, processes, project design and formulation).
- Critical reforms are needed in the forest education sector, from theory-based to practical-based approaches, with better and practical learning approaches to attract young people to the concept of forestry and sustainable forest management.
- Support youth initiatives in sustainable forest management as a way of creating livelihoods and jobs for rapidly growing young populations.
- Build capacity and create mentorship programmes to enable the young to develop skills, exposure and expertise in forestry and sustainable forest management.

Innovation and Investment Forum

- Partnerships between the private sector, government and civil society are the key to promoting innovation in forests and forest products. Forest resources and the multiple products produced from them are inseparable in generating a rationale for investment in land, energy and payments for environmental services.
- Despite the abundance of suitable land in Africa, investment is still low, hampered by insecure land tenure and a lack of user rights. Governments are encouraged to put in place policies that attract and enable investments in forests and forest products. The private sector is encouraged to invest in start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises to promote entrepreneurship, especially among youth and women. Small and medium-sized forest enterprises are important drivers of innovation, employment and income and should also be encouraged.
- Institutional infrastructure is needed to support innovation that is practical and relevant. There is a great need to build human capital and to encourage innovation in education, and to deploy these for better forest management. The use of information technology is key to facilitating collaboration among institutions in different geographic locations and with differing levels of development, including South–South, and to encourage knowledge transfer.
- Innovation in forests and forest products is driven by challenging conventional thinking, more efficient processes, and higher knowledge inputs that support pathways from the lab to the marketplace. Innovation can achieve game-changing effects for sustainable development within the SDG framework, anchored in local conditions and cultures.
- Consumer support through the agile use of social media and crowd sourcing helps drive innovation and encourages companies and researchers to reach out and embrace citizen competence to complement their own.

Joint Event: Climate Financing for the Future

- Governments worldwide want to reach a deal on climate financing, and expectations for the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 21) are high. Governments are building their capacities and already pledging billions of dollars in funding.
- Forestry companies can contribute to mitigating climate change – and also generate economic returns to shareholders, provide employment opportunities for local communities, and ultimately create incentives for managing natural resources sustainably.
- Financing is often unavailable for forestry companies so they can deliver such development benefits – and nor is there access to climate-change financing yet.
- Developing-country governments, donors and the private sector need to work together in new ways to bring climate-change financing to the ground level to unlock the development and mitigation potential of forest investment.

Forests and Climate Change

- Forests are fundamentally important for addressing the global challenge of climate change, and the role of forests should be acknowledged and further strengthened in the post-2020 climate-change framework to be considered at UNFCCC COP 21.
- Each country manages its forests in accordance with its own social and ecological circumstances. The diverse interactions between forests and people should be respected and properly taken into account in the new climate-change regime.
- Continue to enhance awareness and understanding of the significance of climate change for the forest sector among governments and stakeholders, with particular attention to forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples.
- Promote more exchange opportunities, particularly South–South, and partnerships to benefit from ongoing unprecedented experience and knowledge on adaptation and mitigation actions on the ground and new scientific findings and advances in technology.
- Increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities governments face today in addressing climate change, and how to do so in the context of wider sustainable development and achievement of the SDGs.
- Promote sustainable forest management practices, including, where appropriate, through planted and mangrove forests and the sustainable use of wood, that include adaptation to, and the mitigation of, climate change among their objectives.
- Continue to increase the availability and quality of information that will allow for informed decisions by policymakers and help practitioners in implementing the most suitable practices to contribute to the multiple objectives of forest management, including climate-change adaptation and mitigation.
- Acknowledging that the forestry community is already taking action to increase mitigation outcomes and enhance resilience, urge more action on the ground, encourage the assessment of impacts, and communicate outcomes in a transparent manner, including by more coordinated and effective mobilization of diverse financial resources.