



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
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the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

Rome, Italy, 13-16 March 2007

REPORT

OPENING OF THE SESSION (Item 1)

1. The Eighteenth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) was held at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 13 to 16 March 2007.
2. The session was attended by delegates from 128 Members of the Committee, observers from 3 FAO Member Nations and the Holy See, representatives of 10 United Nations Agencies and Programmes and observers from 37 intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations. The list of participants is provided in Appendix B.
3. Mr Abdelazim Mirghani Ibrahim (Sudan), outgoing Chair, opened the session.
4. Mr David A. Harcharik, Deputy Director-General, welcomed delegates and delivered some opening remarks. He introduced Mr Jan Heino, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, who joined FAO in 2006. He drew attention to the ongoing FAO reform and the Independent External Evaluation of FAO, which may influence the Organization's programme in forestry.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 2)

5. The Agenda (Appendix A) was adopted. The documents considered by the Committee are listed in Appendix C.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DESIGNATION OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE (Item 3)

6. The Committee elected Mr G.K. Prasad (India) representing Asia to the Chair, Ms Sally Collins (United States of America), representing North America as First Vice-Chair, and as Vice-Chairs:

Mr Arlito Cuco (Mozambique)	Africa
Mr Alain Chaudron (France)	Europe
Mr Alexandros Christodoulou (Cyprus)	Near East
Mr Héctor Miguel Abreu Aquino (Dominican Republic)	Latin America and the Caribbean
Mr Neil Hughes (Australia)	Southwest Pacific

7. The following Members were elected to the Drafting Committee for the COFO report: Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Germany, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Netherlands, Sudan and the United States of America. The representative of Japan, Mr Hiroki Miyazono, was elected to chair the Drafting Committee and the representative of Brazil, Mr Mario Gustavo Mottin, was elected Vice-Chair.

STATE OF THE WORLD'S FORESTS 2007 (Item 4)

8. The Assistant Director-General of the Forestry Department, Mr Jan Heino, presented an overview of the *State of the World's Forests 2007* (SOFO), the seventh edition in the series. He also introduced the theme of this year's COFO, "Weaving knowledge into development".

9. Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Chairman of the Bureau of the Seventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, to be held in April 2007, noted FAO's crucial role in forestry. This is reflected in the provision of information such as the *State of the World's Forests* and the Global Forest Resources Assessment as well as its support to the International Arrangement on Forests. He underlined the need to join forces and work collectively. He stated that it will be an historical year with the adoption of a non-legally binding instrument and a multi-year programme of work at the Seventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, as requested by ECOSOC in Resolution 2006/49. Furthermore, he highlighted the need to settle forest financing at the global level. He invited Members and FAO to join forces to make the International Year of Forests, 2011, a success.

10. Mr Manoel Sobral Filho, Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), presented the ITTO's study, *Status of Tropical Forest Management 2005*, indicating some improvement in sustainable forest management in the tropics since 1988. He pointed out the effective collaboration between FAO and ITTO in such areas as best practices in forest law enforcement; voluntary guidelines on planted forests; criteria and indicators; and monitoring, assessment and reporting.

11. The Committee appreciated the *State of the World's Forests 2007*, including regional reports on progress towards sustainable forest management, which were reviewed and supplemented by the six regional forestry commissions, and welcomed the status reports on key thematic topics.

12. The Committee requested FAO to continue to report on forest resources, products, policies and institutions through an integrated and harmonized assessment approach using national focal points, regional forestry commissions, advisory committees, and collaborating with other processes and organizations, to enhance the ability of SOFO to deliver key findings.

13. Some Members welcomed the new COFO format with informal sessions in the afternoon and the opportunities this provides for discussion and exchange of experience.

FORESTS AND ENERGY: NEW CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (Item 5)

14. The Committee recognized bioenergy as a strategic, multidisciplinary issue which affects many sectors and acknowledged the important work of FAO in this area.

15. The Committee requested FAO to assist Members to develop comprehensive and integrated national bioenergy strategies, including wood energy, as well as to integrate wood energy issues in national forest programmes or other forest strategies.

16. The Committee requested FAO to prepare an analytical report on the social, economic and environmental impacts of changes in the use of wood for energy generation.

17. The Committee requested FAO to organize workshops to promote dialogue at the national and regional levels to help increase institutional and technical capacity related to the sustainable production and consumption of bioenergy, including wood energy.

18. The Committee requested FAO to support Members in updating national information with respect to their energy balances and potentials.

19. The Committee recommended that FAO facilitate dialogue with industry, the private sector and policy-makers on alternative energy, and/or bioenergy-related technologies and on the potential for the transfer of such technologies to developing countries.

20. The Committee encouraged FAO to finalize the guidelines for sustainable woodfuel production, after having sought feedback from as many Members as possible.

21. The Committee encouraged FAO to work with partners at all levels to address issues related to the existing use and increased demand for bioenergy.

22. The Committee also encouraged strengthening cooperation among members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and other relevant organizations and initiatives involved in bioenergy issues to maximize complementarity and to avoid duplication of activities.

23. The Committee noted the need for the development of information material for the promotion of bioenergy, including material on policies and incentives for bioenergy for use by national authorities. It encouraged FAO to take an active role in this process.

FOREST PROTECTION (Item 6)

24. The Committee recognized the increasing threats to forest ecosystems from wildfires, pests and invasive species. It recommended that FAO strengthen its technical support to countries to address these issues and urged FAO to continue to promote the exchange of information and experiences through networking, capacity building and international cooperation.

25. The Committee recommended that FAO support developing countries in strengthening their capacities to monitor and control pest and diseases, as well as invasive species.

26. The Committee recommended that FAO work with Members to promote, expand and create linkages among the regional, subregional and national networks on invasive species. It also

requested FAO to support the establishment of a sub-regional invasive species network among the Southern Cone Countries as part of the work of the Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission.

27. The Committee recommended that FAO work with Members to provide expanded linkages among regional, sub-regional and national networks and further support international cooperation on fire management.

28. In this context, the Committee requested FAO, in collaboration with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Global Wildland Fire Network and other partners, to finalize the Strategy to Enhance International Cooperation on Fire Management and welcomed the plan to present it at the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference, to be held in Seville from 14 to 17 May 2007.

29. The Committee welcomed the development of Voluntary Guidelines on Fire Management in a multistakeholder process. It recommended that Members and forestry stakeholders make use of the guidelines and that FAO and partners facilitate their implementation in order to improve practices on the prevention, suppression and recovery from forest fire. The Committee also recommended that the Guidelines be maintained as a living document, to be updated and improved by incorporating feedback from implementation at country level.

30. Furthermore, the Committee requested that FAO support the establishment of a regional wildland fire network in the Near East Region.

31. The Committee suggested that FAO further investigate the link between climate change and forest health.

PUTTING FORESTRY TO WORK AT THE LOCAL LEVEL (Item 7)

32. The Committee recognized the significant contributions of participatory approaches to sustainable forest management and welcomed FAO's initiatives to highlight the need for clear and secure forest tenure.

33. The Committee recognized that participatory approaches and devolution of management rights do not always lead to sustainable forest management and that the involvement of local stakeholders needs to be built upon improved stakeholder capacity and effective national forest programmes and policies.

34. The Committee agreed that national forest programmes are important means of involving local communities in the establishment of common goals. They also provide a basis for integrating forest issues within the larger context of sustainable development and for addressing forest law compliance.

35. The Committee underscored the need for technical and financial resources to support national forest programmes and requested FAO to support Members' efforts to develop and implement their national forest programmes.

36. The Committee requested that FAO carry out further studies on forest tenure and its implications for sustainable forest management and poverty alleviation in Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

37. The Committee highlighted the need for communities to optimize benefits from their forests. In this context, the Committee requested that FAO, in collaboration with partners, assist

those communities and smallholders in developing countries, as appropriate, to develop small-scale forest-based enterprises for timber and non-timber products.

38. The Committee requested that FAO, in collaboration with the National Forest Programme Facility, assist developing countries, as appropriate, in better integrating forestry in poverty reduction strategies in order to enhance the contributions of forestry to poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods.

39. The Committee urged FAO to retain staff capacity to continue its work in participatory forestry.

IN-SESSION SEMINAR: REGIONAL ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (Item 8)

40. The Committee held an in-session seminar on the ways to boost regional forestry cooperation and action. The chairs of the six regional forestry commissions made presentations on advancements, challenges and ways forward for implementing sustainable forest management in their region. This was followed by presentations by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and the Central American Forest Strategy, and an open dialogue among the participants, facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as one of the CPF members.

41. The Committee appreciated the opportunity for informal dialogue as part of the COFO 2007 session. Participants of the in-session seminar noted the diverse and creative approaches being implemented in the regions to promote and support action on sustainable forest management. They emphasized the need for greater linkages among regions and sub-regions to share lessons learned and best practices for addressing common problems.

PROGRESSING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT (Item 8)

42. The Committee requested FAO, in collaboration with Members and partner organizations, to develop, promote and implement management tools to bridge the gap between policy and actions at all levels with emphasis on inter-sectoral and landscape approaches. This would help to improve sustainable forest management and to achieve the four Global Objectives on Forests agreed by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its Sixth Session, and to mainstream forestry within efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve sustainable water and land use, mitigate climate change and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

43. The Committee requested FAO to continue its support to the development, implementation and monitoring of national forest programmes, including in partnership with the National Forest Programme Facility. It also requested FAO to make available updated information on the status and progress of national forest programmes.

44. The Committee requested FAO to continue assisting Members in their efforts to improve law compliance in the forest sector by promoting the use of best practices, the sharing of experiences among countries and collaboration at the regional level.

45. The Committee recommended that FAO collaborate with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to assist developing countries in taking the best advantage of GEF as one possible source of funding to improve sustainable forest management and to achieve the Global Objectives on Forests.

46. The Committee recognized the importance of information exchange, technology transfer, capacity building, as well as a need to mobilize increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of sustainable forest management.

47. The Committee commended FAO on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005 (FRA 2005) and recognized the considerable progress in harmonizing national information in a global synthesis and in using a participatory process. The Committee recommended that FAO continue to collaborate with Members, CPF members, and regional partners, including the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and criteria and indicator processes, in global forest resources assessments. It endorsed the recommendations of the International Expert Consultation on Forest Resources Assessments (Kotka V) as a basis for the preparation of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 (FRA 2010). The Committee also requested that FRA 2010 take into full account the Global Objectives on Forests.

48. The Committee commended FAO for facilitating a multi-stakeholder process to develop Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Management of Planted Forests. The Committee recommended that FAO work with Members and partners, including the private sector, forest owners and environmental NGOs towards the implementation of these guidelines. It also recommended that the Guidelines be maintained as a living document, to be updated and improved by incorporating feedback from implementation at country level.

49. The Committee recommended that FAO strengthen the implementation of guidelines for Reduced Impact Forest Harvesting in Tropical Forests in African, Asia-Pacific and Latin American and Caribbean countries.

50. The Committee noted that the Near East Forestry Commission and the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission had recommended, respectively, that FAO facilitate the preparation, in a multi-stakeholder process, of voluntary guidelines for arid and semi-arid zone forests and voluntary guidelines for trees outside forests.

DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF FAO BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE (Item 9)

51. The Committee appreciated the active role played by the regional forestry commissions in advancing sustainable forest management, and recommended that each commission should develop a programme of work to facilitate the implementation of sustainable forest management.

52. The Committee emphasized the role of the regional forestry commissions and other regional processes in providing a venue for action-oriented dialogue on the implementation of sustainable forest management. In that regard, it recommended that FAO increase the allocation of resources and support for the work of the commissions.

53. The Committee also emphasized the role of the regional forestry commissions and processes in providing a link to the international dialogue of the Committee and of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

54. The Committee recommended that the chairs of the regional forestry commissions play an active role in planning and managing the work of COFO through its Steering Committee and that the Steering Committee should meet at least once between the official COFO sessions, taking into account budgetary constraints.

55. Members of the AFWC/EFC/NEFC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions *Silva Mediterranea* requested FAO to support their efforts to reactivate it.

56. The Committee recommended that FAO assist developing countries in managing forest genetic resources to achieve sustainable forest management, in collaboration with other institutions, *inter alia* the Convention on Biological Diversity.

SHAPING AN ACTION PROGRAMME FOR FAO IN FORESTRY (Item 10)

57. The Committee welcomed FAO's intention to review its strategic plan for forestry by the 19th Session of COFO (March 2009). The Committee stressed the importance of the outcome of the 34th Session of the FAO Conference, the Seventh Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Independent External Evaluation of FAO and general UN Reform and requested the Forestry Department to take note of these developments in the proposed strategic review. It recommended that the regional forestry commissions be involved in the review and that FAO should provide opportunities for Members, the private sector, and civil society to contribute.

58. The Committee acknowledged the assistance that FAO provides to policy development at all levels in its support to the United Nations Forum on Forests, through the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and the UNFF's multi-year programme of work when adopted, to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, and to national forest programmes or other forest strategies. The Committee also recognized FAO's technical excellence in the areas of capacity building and knowledge management.

59. The Committee supported the cross-sectoral approach in FAO's work, such as in the areas of forests and water, forests and climate change, and forests, poverty alleviation and food security. Other important areas that should continue to receive attention are forestry policy and economics, outlook studies, institutional strengthening, eco-tourism, and forest law enforcement and governance, as well as securing tenure arrangements.

60. The Committee recommended that FAO enhance its ability to provide comprehensive support in the forest sector, retaining strong capacity in policy and planning, forest management, forest economics and industry as well as in generating and sharing information.

61. The Committee requested FAO to strengthen its role as a knowledge and communication centre for forestry, with an emphasis on information and analysis in support of sustainable forest management, by producing, publishing and disseminating technical and policy reports, guidelines, country information and databases.

62. The Committee recommended that FAO continue to assist its Members to develop and implement their national forest programmes or other forest strategies, including through the National Forest Programme Facility. In particular, emphasis is required to build capacity in communities for improved forest management.

63. The Committee recognized the importance of the seven thematic elements and recommended that FAO continue to work with CPF members and other organizations and processes to further harmonize forest-related reporting and terminology.

64. The Committee requested that FAO continue to support national monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests, including their social, economic and environmental benefits. The Committee urged Members, FAO and other partners to enhance international collaboration in this field, taking into account national specificities.

65. The Committee noted the need to provide continuing support to sustainable mountain development as well as to fragile ecosystems such as mangroves.

66. The Committee recommended that FAO, in collaboration with the United Nations Framework for the Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other partners, assist countries in strengthening their capacities to develop and implement climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, including to reduce emissions from deforestation.

67. The Committee requested FAO to assist developing countries, especially in Africa, in better managing and using under-utilized wood species and in reforestation with suitable species.

68. While acknowledging the process of reform under way in both FAO and the UN, the Committee expressed concern at the reduction in the budget and staffing of the Forestry Department and the impact that this might have on the delivery of forestry support to Members. The Committee also expressed concern at the increasing dependence of normative work of the Forestry Department on extra-budgetary funding.

69. The Committee requested FAO to provide more information and analysis about the sources and use of extra-budgetary funds, including an ex-post assessment of all Forestry Department funding for the biennium preceding the Nineteenth Session of COFO.

XIII WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS (Item 11)

70. The Committee thanked the Government of Argentina for the preparations for the XIII WFC to be held in Buenos Aires in October 2009 and welcomed the theme “*Forests in Development: a Vital Balance*”, as decided by the Organizing Committee. It requested FAO to continue its collaboration with the Organizing Committee, including to publish in good time the programme of the Congress. The Committee recommended that Members and partner organizations start preparing for their active participation in this event.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Item 12)

71. The Committee agreed to hold its next session in Rome in March 2009.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Item 13)

72. The Committee adopted the report by consensus.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION (Item 14)

73. The Chair closed the session at 16:30 on 16 March 2007.