



The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

Value and services of forest genetic resources

Genetic diversity provides the fundamental basis for the evolution of forest tree species and for their adaptation to change. Conserving forest genetic resources is therefore vital, as they are a unique and irreplaceable resource for the future. The sustainable management of forests requires a better understanding of the specific features of forest trees and their genetic diversity. Forest tree species are generally long lived and extremely diverse. One species can naturally occur in a broad range of ecological conditions. In addition, forest species have evolved under several periods of climatic change; their genetic variability provides the capability to adapt to emerging climatic conditions. Forest genetic resources have provided the potential for adaptation in the past, and will continue to provide this vital role as we address the challenge of mitigating or adapting to further climate changes. In developing sustainable forest management, forestry practices that maintain genetic diversity over the longer term will be required, taking into account the potential need to accelerate adaptation of forest trees to climate change through breeding and proactive management of genetic resources.

Preparation of The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

Forest genetic resources management can be effective only if treated as an integral element of overall sustainable forest management. Conservation concerns should be integrated into broader national and local development programmes, such as national forest programmes, rural development plans and poverty reduction strategies, which promote cooperation among sectors.

It is recognized that reliable general data on forest status and trends is of great importance to the efficient management of forest genetic resources. However, there is no consolidated global picture on the status and trends of forest genetic resources, and estimators of the rate of genetic diversity loss are lacking. This limits the capacity of countries and the international community to integrate forest genetic resources management into policies. Forest-related information, however, largely refers to forest resources in general rather than to forest diversity and variation. Specific information on the status and trends in forest genetic resources is today insufficient and inadequate.

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) of FAO acknowledged the urgency of conserving and sustainably utilizing forest genetic resources and requested FAO that a first ever report on *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* be prepared and presented to the Commission in 2013. The Committee on Forestry endorsed the preparation process and welcomed the initiative to develop a comprehensive report on *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* and recommended that FAO continue this important effort. The preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* was also welcomed by the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Main activities 2010-2011

Regional workshops to discuss and finalize the Guidelines for the Preparation of Country Reports in Latin America, Quito Ecuador (March 2010) and Central Africa, Brazzaville, Congo (March 2010)

Regional training workshop for National Focal Points to support the preparation of country reports on forest genetic resources in Latin America, Colombia Cali (November 2010), Pacific, Fiji (January 2011), Asia, Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (March 2011), Africa, Kenya, Nairobi (April 2011) and Near East, Tunisia, Hammamet (May, 2011)

Upgrading of the global database on forest genetic resources, REFORGEN.

Preparation of thematic studies

Analysis and synthesis of country reports on forest genetic resources for **The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources**



Process and activities

The report on *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* will be prepared through a country-driven approach based on country reports and thematic studies. The Global Forest Resources Assessment process might serve as a model, and the two processes will be linked. The primary source of data and information for the preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* will be country reports on forest genetic resources. The Country Report preparatory process, taking place in 2011, will focus on the review of existing data and information and the identification of gaps and needs. Detailed FAO guidelines are available to assist in the preparation of Country Reports. They can both serve as a strategic tool to guide national efforts to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources, as well as provide the basis for preparing the global report on *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*. The need to establish national mechanisms to ensure opportunities for the participation of national stakeholders in the preparation of the Country Report is emphasized. Countries will be encouraged to hold national workshops and/or other means for consultations with indigenous and local communities and stakeholders in elaborating their Country Reports. Subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, limited financial assistance will be made available to support developing countries to prepare their Country Reports, including assisting them to conduct workshops and consultations.

During the same period, the global forest genetic resource database REFORGEN will be upgraded to serve as a dynamic and interactive information repository for *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* and its further update and monitoring.

Expected results and outcome

The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources will provide information on the status and trends, identify needs, gaps and priorities as the basis for developing a framework for action at national, regional, eco-regional and global levels.

For more information

web:

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/en/>

<http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cthemes/forest>

e-mail: sow-fgr@fao.org

