Progress in Reforming the International Poplar Commission (IPC)

Committee on Forestry (22nd Session, 2014)
Item 6.7 - Progress in Statutory Bodies
Rome, Italy, 25 June 2014

Stefano Bisoffi, IPC-Executive Committee Member
Poplars & willows: 95 million ha in boreal & temperate regions
Poplars & willows: multi-purpose wood
International Poplar Commission (IPC)

- Statutory Body of FAO, established in 1947 by 6 European countries
- 37 member countries, more than half of which are developing economies
- FAO hosts IPC Secretariat

- Mandate: to promote the cultivation, conservation and utilization of poplars and willows
- Goal: to enhance well-being and rural livelihoods in developing countries through the transfer of knowledge and technology
IPC Organization

Working Parties

- Sub-committee nomenclature & registration
- Genetics, Conservation, Improvement
- Harvesting and Utilization
- Diseases
- Production Systems
- Insects and other animal pests
- Environmental applications

FAO Conference

FAO-Council

Committee on Forestry (COFO)

IPC-Executive Committee

Secretariat

37 Member Countries
Key outputs & achievements of IPC

• Information network of experts, scientists, academics, growers, processors, users and policy makers
• Transfer of seeds, planting material, knowledge and technology to improve management practices and policies
• Website and sub-portals for working parties, directories, newsletters
• Publications, e.g. “Poplars and willows – Trees for society and the environment”
• Congresses/study tours/working party meetings
• Joint research programs
• International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) for *Populus* and *Salix* appointed by the International Society for Horticultural Sciences
• Pilot afforestation projects in China, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey
Main challenges IPC is facing

- Strong interest by poplar and willow specialists, but difficult to attract interest of stakeholders and partners
- Country membership stagnant (no new members since 2000)
- IPC and NPC’s lack resources and face challenges in meeting their obligations
- Links with FAO mandate (sustainable livelihoods and land-use) not always apparent
- Technical fields represented by working parties need to be more integrated into multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral environmental and development issues
- Narrow geographic and technical focus calls for expansion of the thematic scope to include other genera and species of socioeconomic and ecological importance
Formal Recommendations

COFO 2012 took note of the suggested expansion and requested FAO to provide further information including at the 2012 IPC-Session in Dehradun, India (item 70 of the COFO 2012 report)

IPC-Executive Committee met in Dehradun in 2012 and
• acknowledged that maintaining the status quo of IPC was not a viable option for long-term relevance and impact of the IPC
• recommended supporting a comprehensive reform process and establishing a Reform Task Force among its members
The proposed reform

• Expansion of the thematic scope
• Revised title of the IPC-Convention
• Thematic restructuring of the working parties
• Strengthening national poplar commissions
• Increased funding of IPC-Secretariat
• Use of official languages according to geographical distribution of members
• Eliminate “General Committee”
• Apply gender neutral language
Points for consideration/further steps

COFO 2014 may wish to:

• invite countries to strengthen linkages between agriculture and forestry sectors by considering membership in the IPC
• invite member countries to strengthen their national poplar commissions in line with the proposed IPC reform
• encourage the Executive Committee to continue the reform process as indicated

IPC Executive Committee will:

• meet and discuss the proposed reform options in July 2014 in Vancouver, Canada
• seek approval of the members of the Commission at its next session in 2016.
Thank you for your attention!
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