

Summary Report
**Third Meeting of the Task Force of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests
(CPF) on Streamlining Forest-Related Reporting**

20-21 November 2003, Rome, Italy

Hosted by FAO

Participants:

FAO: Michael Martin (Chair), Peter Holmgren, Tiina Vähänen (Secretary)

ITTO: Steve Johnson

Secretariat of UNFCCC: Heikki Granholm

Secretariat of UNFF: Susan Braatz

UNEP: Jinhua Zhang

A conference call was arranged with Manuel Guariguata, Secretariat of CBD.

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Mr Michael Martin, FAO. Mr Hosny El-Lakany, Assistant Director-General, FAO Forestry Department, welcomed members on behalf of FAO as the host. In his capacity as Chair of CPF he thanked the task force members for very fruitful work thus far and encouraged concrete outcomes and solutions towards reducing the reporting burden that could be presented at the UNFF ad hoc expert group on monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) in December in Geneva.

Participants agreed that the main objective of the meeting was to review the three draft working documents with a view of producing an input for the UNFF *ad hoc* expert group meeting on MAR that would inform the expert group participants about the current process of forest-related information collection conducted by international agencies; and provide an idea for the way forward – both to reduce reporting burden and increase the coherence and utility of the information reported. The agenda was adopted.

2. Review of working papers

The member reviewed two working papers prepared beforehand on:

1. International Forest-related Reporting: a Review and Comparative Analysis (prepared by Manuel Guariguata, CBD Secretariat)
2. Towards a Common Framework for Forest-related Reporting (prepared by Peter Holmgren, FAO)

Review and comparative analysis of international forest-related reporting

The working paper no 1 was considered a very comprehensive description of the task force's previous work, including the review and analysis of forest-related reporting requests by CPF members; options and impediments for streamlining and reducing reporting burden; and the development of the CPF web portal www.fao.org/forestry/cpf-mar

Members agreed to review the description of their organization's reporting process and provide a ½-page analysis (lessons learned and challenges) by 25 of November 2003. FAO agreed to finalize the paper in January 2004.

Towards common information framework for forest-related national reporting

Most of the meeting time was spent on reviewing the idea of a common information framework for forest-related national reporting to international processes. This was seen as the task force's input to the UNFF expert group, as requested by the CPF, following the invitation by UNFF to CPF to make scientific and technical contributions to the work of the expert group.

On the basis of the working paper no 2, members developed and agreed on the concept of the common information framework for "actions" (taken in relation to the stated objectives of an international arrangement, instrument or agreement) and for "trends and situations" (on forest resources, products and services, and policy and institutional frameworks). Thematic areas of sustainable forest management would be used to organize information in the framework.

Members also agreed on a set of recommendations addressed to CPF and countries for the development of the framework and emphasized that countries would need to secure financial and human resources for the development of the framework.

It was agreed that FAO would finalize the paper that introduced the common information framework, send it for task force members' comments by 27 November and CPF members' comments and approval by 6 December. Participants agreed that, once approved by CPF, Steve Johnson, ITTO, and Tiina Vahanen, FAO, would table the paper and make a presentation on behalf of the task force at the UNFF expert group meeting. The paper, including the recommendations is available at the CPF portal: www.fao.org/forestry/site/7694/en.

Capacity building

A third working paper, Building Capacity for Forest-related Information Management, was also drafted (by Peter Holmgren, FAO) for consideration by the task force members. However, the time did not permit this. It was agreed that members send comments to FAO that would further elaborate it in early 2004 for discussion at the next meeting as one of the task force's top priorities.

3. Streamlining Portal

Tiina Vahanen and Federica Urbani (who had maintained and updated the site), FAO, gave an update of the developments in the Portal. All members had been very active in providing updates. Susan Braatz, UNFF Secretariat, confirmed that the secretariat had arranged translation of the site in French and Spanish. It was agreed that all members would review the translations as regards to their own information by 31 December 2003, before launching the sites. FAO would continue to maintain the portal.

4. Next meeting

It was suggested initially that the next meeting would be held in March 2003.

5. Closure of the meeting

Chair closed the meeting at 17:00.