



## FAO FORESTRY

### Future of forests in Asia and the Pacific

Unprecedented economic, social and environmental change in the Asia and the Pacific region is significantly altering the way its forests are regarded and used. Looking forward was the theme of a regional conference entitled “The Future of Forests in Asia and the Pacific: Outlook for 2020” held in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 16 to 18 October 2007. The conference attracted more than 250 participants from over 40 countries.

The conference was organized by the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) within the scope of the ongoing Asia-Pacific Forestry Sector Outlook Study (APFSOS II) – both as an opportunity for presentation of the study’s preliminary findings, and as a forum for gathering the views of diverse stakeholders on emerging changes and their implications for forests and forestry in the region. Participants, in addition to APFSOS national focal points, included foresters, students, educators, researchers, government officials, project managers and representatives from the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multilateral organizations. Special guests were five winners of an essay competition for young professionals who had eloquently provided their views on the future of forests in the region.

Conference participants analysed the major driving forces of change in the region, and how these forces are likely to shape the perception and use of forests in the coming years. Themes included macro-economic prospects, environmental change, institutional transition, urbanization, technological development and application, international trade, land-use trends, poverty alleviation and the growing importance of planted forests. Private-sector and civil-society perspectives were also presented.

In the keynote address, Jagmohan Maini, former coordinator of the United Nations Forum on Forests, spoke of the importance of far-reaching planning processes. Subsequent presentations took stock of the current status of the region’s forests and offered projections of many of the pressures expected to influence forests in the coming years. Many divergent views – pessimistic and optimistic in varying measure – led to vibrant discussions about the future of forests in the region and how best to address emerging challenges. A poster session with 55 entries highlighted prospects at the national level, providing participants an opportunity to engage in informal discussion on focused topics.

In general, the conference affirmed that the future of forests and forestry in the region will continue to be driven by an array of factors largely outside the forest sector. Expanding populations, a shift from subsistence to consumer economies, increasing wealth and economic activity and new markets will increase overall demand on forests, while growing environmental pressures will require that “new” forest values be captured for society in general. As the numbers and kinds of demands placed on forests increase, it is anticipated that so too will the numbers and kinds of stakeholders concerned with how forests are managed. This highlights the immense challenge of balancing competing demands.



FAO/FO-97/36 CHIANKEU

Corruption, while not unique to forestry, is likely to continue to hinder sustainable forest management efforts unless dramatic action is taken across all sectors to address the problem. The importance of flexible governance structures and active collaboration with other sectors and regions was a common message emerging from the conference.

More sophisticated thinking and new partnerships will be needed to address the challenges successfully. Viable solutions will entail nuanced, interdisciplinary and international thinking and cooperation. The conference was an important step in the direction of such needed exchange and collaboration.

The conference proceedings will be published in early 2008. The programme, presentations and papers are available at: [www.fao.org/forestry/site/33592/en](http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/33592/en)

### Special Event on Forests and Energy

On 20 November 2007, at the biennial session of the Conference of FAO, Director-General Jacques Diouf convened a High-Level Special Event on Forests and Energy. Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, President of Cape Verde, delivered the keynote speech, and the session was chaired by the Minister for Forestry of the Congo and the Minister for Agriculture of Latvia.

Participation included 275 delegates from approximately 90 FAO member countries. Country statements recognized that bioenergy has become a global strategic issue which increasingly affects economic, social and environmental conditions and has potential to mitigate climate change. Wood is the most important biofuel and an economically and environmentally efficient substitute for fossil fuels. However, particularly in developing countries, a lack of information on wood used for fuel hampers countries’ decision-making on the sustainable use of this resource, and thus hinders an opportunity to mitigate climate change and strengthen countries’ energy mix. Furthermore, with growing population and increasing land allocation for energy production, trade-offs between forest, energy and agricultural use of land need to be carefully examined.



## XIII World Forestry Congress, 2009: call for papers



From 18 to 25 October 2009, the international forestry community will meet in Buenos Aires, Argentina for the XIII World Forestry Congress – the most important forestry meeting worldwide. For one week, representatives of the public and private sectors, the scientific community, foresters, professionals and other interested parties will have an opportunity to analyse and discuss the gamut of forest-related issues.

Under the theme “Forests in development – a vital balance”, the congress will address sustainable forest management from a global and integrated perspective. It will cover seven thematic areas:

- Forests and biodiversity;
- Producing for development;
- Forests in the service of people;
- Caring for our forests;
- Forest sector: development opportunities;
- Organizing forest development;
- People and forest in harmony.

The complete thematic structure of the congress can be viewed on the congress’s Web site ([www.wfc2009.org](http://www.wfc2009.org)).

Voluntary presentations and poster sessions will be an important part of the congress. These must express new ideas and provide information on current investigations, field experiences, development projects, theoretical models or practical applications. The congress will seek to achieve a balanced representation of geographic regions and points of view.

All interested people are invited to submit papers before 30 June 2008. Papers must not exceed 4 500 words, tables included, and must include an abstract of not longer than 250 words. The author must identify the congress theme to which the paper corresponds, justifying this placement using three to five keywords.

All submissions will be peer reviewed and evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Is the topic relevant to the thematic sessions? Will it be interesting to a large number of participants?
- **Quality:** Is the argument coherent, well structured and comprehensible?

- **Originality:** Is the treatment of the subject innovative and original? Previously published papers are not eligible.

According to their ranking, papers will be published in full or in part on the congress’s Web site.

Some papers will be selected for presentation by their authors during the congress sessions, and some authors may be invited to prepare posters. For a paper to be considered for presentation, it must be of major interest to the congress deliberations and provide an exhaustive analysis of the topic addressed. It should apply to a significant number of countries or at least one ecoregion; be related to current and emerging issues; and address cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary linkages. Authors must accept that, without prior notification, their documents may be edited and translated into the official languages of the congress – Spanish, English and French.

All individuals who are planning to participate in the congress, including those invited to make presentations, are required to register and are responsible for payment of the registration fee and their own expenses.

Guidelines for submissions can be downloaded from the congress Web site ([www.wfc2009.org](http://www.wfc2009.org)). They can also be requested by mail or fax (see below) or by e-mail to: [info@wfc2009.org](mailto:info@wfc2009.org)

Authors are strongly encouraged to submit their contributions by uploading them on the congress Web site. Alternatively, papers, including abstracts, can be sent before 30 June 2008 to:

Documentation Officer  
 XIII World Forestry Congress  
 Forestry Department  
 FAO  
 Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
 00153 Rome, Italy  
 Tel: +39 06 5705-2198  
 Fax: +39 06 5705-5137  
 E-mail: [WFC-XIII@fao.org](mailto:WFC-XIII@fao.org)

Individuals or groups wishing to receive future announcements by e-mail can subscribe at: [www.wfc2009.org](http://www.wfc2009.org)



Delegates expressed the following needs for coping with current and future challenges in this area:

- wood energy strategies based on sustainable forest management concepts;
- capacity building for integration of bioenergy strategies in national forest programmes and plans;
- attention to bioenergy as a cross-sectoral issue and its integration in forest, agricultural and other land-use policies;
- coordination of bioenergy strategies with poverty eradication and poverty reduction policies;
- enhanced capacities for the use of alternative renewable energy sources, including hydropower, solar energy and biogas;
- increased energy efficiency of wood combustion at household and industrial levels;
- better use of post-consumer wood;
- consideration of the value of wood for other end-uses before it is used for energy generation;
- effective dissemination of research and development findings, technologies and expertise for efficient and healthy energy use;
- avoidance of market distortions in the promotion of bioenergy;
- systems of continuous checks and balances for production of biofuels to avoid negative impacts on the environment and ensure the well-being of local communities;

- careful consideration of food security and negative effects on other sectors in the design and implementation of incentives for biofuel production.

### Linking national forest programmes to poverty reduction strategies in Africa

Between November 2005 and July 2007, FAO conducted a study in ten countries in Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia), in collaboration with the National Forest Programme Facility, to examine the linkages between national forest programmes and national strategies to reduce poverty. The study revealed that the two processes are not well connected for the most part, mainly because central authorities are often unaware of the many ways in which forests and trees outside forests help to reduce poverty and, by the same token, forestry officials are not generally engaged in national discussions on poverty. The study also found that weak forestry capacity in all countries is hindering efforts to strengthen collaboration within and outside the sector, including with central planning agencies and relevant line ministries.

In Nairobi, Kenya from 20 to 22 November 2007, a regional workshop was held to exchange ideas on how to increase the presence and influence of forestry in central decision-making

## Comments requested on new FAO strategy for forestry

In March 2007, the Committee on Forestry (COFO) requested that a new FAO strategy for forestry be developed in consultation with FAO member countries and other partners. The consultative process has begun. In the first stage of the consultation, comments are requested on a discussion paper on elements of a possible strategy, posted online (see below). The paper presents the following potential strategic goals for forestry:

- Decision-making is informed, harmonized across sectors, and participatory.
- Benefits from trees, forests and forestry are increasing, equitably shared, and widely recognized and appreciated.
- Forest resources are increasing and ecosystem services are increasingly valued.

The paper also outlines potential elements of strategies for achieving the goals, including:

- strengthening country capacities to make good decisions about forests through participatory processes;
- strengthening information to support policy-making;
- improving forestry practices including through best practice guidelines developed using multistakeholder processes;
- promoting networks for sharing knowledge and implementing improved practices;
- working across sectors, helping countries mainstream forestry in national development processes;
- working in partnership with others in the public and private sectors to leverage resources and avoid duplication;
- improving vertical linkages, facilitating knowledge exchange between local, national, regional and global levels;
- improving advocacy to raise awareness and increase commitments to invest in better forestry;
- continuing to serve as a neutral forum for exchange of knowledge about forests and forestry.

Based on feedback received during the first part of 2008 – including discussions at the biennial sessions of the Regional Forestry Commissions – a draft strategy will be developed and circulated for comments during a second phase of the consultation in mid-2008. The goal is to propose a new strategy to COFO at its next meeting in March 2009.

*Unasylva* readers are invited to comment on the discussion paper. To review it and to send comments electronically, please visit: [www.fao.org/forestry/strategy](http://www.fao.org/forestry/strategy)

Comments can also be sent by e-mail to: [FO-Strategy@fao.org](mailto:FO-Strategy@fao.org)



processes. To this end, the ten countries that participated in the study explored practical ways to make national forest programmes an integral part of national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. The workshop, organized by FAO in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service and the National Forest Programme Facility, brought together more than 40 participants from government and international organizations, including ministries outside forestry – finance, planning and economic development, national statistics, environment, and agriculture, among others.

Following a rich exchange of views on how best to improve collaboration to reduce poverty – which validated the main findings and conclusions of the study – each country prepared a list of priorities for follow-up action and identified areas requiring support from the Facility and other international partners. As a positive sign of commitment to implement the suggestions contained in the country reports, participants from Kenya established a multidisciplinary task force during the workshop and scheduled a first meeting for the following week.

### First Community Forestry Agreements signed in Cambodia

FAO projects over many years, funded by Belgium and New Zealand, have facilitated a major development in community forestry in Cambodia: the signing of the country's first ten Community Forestry Agreements. On 19 November 2007, a formal signing ceremony took place in Tbeng Lech Village, Siem Reap Province, between the Chief of the Forestry Administration of Siem Reap Cantonment and the chairs of ten Community Forestry Management Committees. Also present were the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Provincial Governor of Siem Reap and the Director General of the Forestry Administration.

In Cambodia, development of a legal framework for community forestry, clearly defining the rights, roles and responsibilities of the State and of communities, began in the early 1990s. As a result of these efforts, the Forest Law (2002) recognizes community forestry as one of the modalities for sustainable forest management in the country. Other elements of the framework include the Subdecree on Community Forestry Management (2003) and Guidelines for Community Forestry (2006).

Many donor-supported projects were simultaneously developing community forestry on the ground with interested communities. Throughout the country there are now more than 264 Community Forests at various stages of development, covering approximately 179 000 ha and involving more than 57 000 families who are beginning to realize direct benefits. Most of the communities have taken steps towards the formal recognition of their Community Forests and are working with the Forestry Administration and partners to complete the remaining steps required by the guidelines.

The FAO project "Community Forestry in Northwestern Cambodia", with 12 years of activity one of the longest-running community forestry projects in the country, has over the years supported the development of 37 Community Forests and six Community Protected Areas in Siem Reap Province. The Siem Reap Cantonment was the first to submit a list of potential Community Forests to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the first to receive approval for these forests. The signing of the Community Forestry Agreements represents the final step in the formalization of these Community Forests, which can now begin to develop formal Community Forestry Management Plans.

The project will continue to provide support to help the other identified Community Forests reach the same stage.

### FAO to develop report on the state of the world's forest genetic resources

At its eleventh session in June 2007, the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture requested that FAO prepare a report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources, for review at its twelfth session in 2009. The commission acknowledged the urgent need to conserve, manage and sustainably use forest genetic resources to support food security, poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability, and approved the inclusion of forest genetic resources in its Multi-Year Programme of Work.

Work on the report will be undertaken in close collaboration with international partners such as Bioversity International, and in synergy with ongoing regional and global programmes such as those carried out under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The report will focus on tree and shrub genetic resources of actual or potential value for human well-being, and will provide the basis for developing a framework for action to advance conservation and sustainable use at the national, regional, ecoregional and global levels.

The report will draw on data from the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2005 and national and regional studies on forest genetic resources carried out with FAO support since the mid-1990s. However, with current knowledge most quantitative and qualitative variables commonly recorded in forest inventories cannot be used to determine status and trends at the level of tree species, provenances, populations and genes. It will thus be necessary to define variables for assessing biological diversity and to develop easily measurable genetic indicators for monitoring changes over time.