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**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION****TWENTY-NINTH SESSION****Lima - Peru, 9 – 13 November, 2015****FAO'S REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES TO THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS OF THE 28<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE COMMISSION****Note by the Secretariat**

*1. Countries offered to increase South-South Cooperation, and recommended FAO to facilitate cooperation mechanisms among countries. Some members of the Commission stated their availability to cooperate on forest protection, the development of wildfire programmes, and forest monitoring management (Par. 20).*

**Central American Strategic Program for Forest Ecosystem Management**

2. The 2013-2017 review process of the Regional Strategic Program for Forests (PERFOR) was finalized with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH* (GIZ), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This new strategic programme, which provides a basis for the cooperation amongst countries, was launched in El Salvador, on October 27, 2014 and currently has a set of indicators to monitor the advance of the progress in the implementation of the strategy.

3. During 2015 a new process of dissemination of PERFOR has been initiated at national level with a national workshops held in August in Nicaragua, Panama and Guatemala. At the time of preparation of this report workshops were being planned in several other countries.

**Regional Workshop on Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)**

4. The Regional Latin American Workshop of C&I for the SFM, was held in Tarapoto, Peru, from 17 to 19 June, 2015 in the framework of Project GCP/GLO/503/GER "Strengthening criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and their use in forestry policy and practice", executed by FAO and financed by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture. The event was part of the second phase of the mentioned project and enhanced the data gathering process to build a common perspective and the definition of a roadmap to strengthen the use and application of C&I for SFM. The project proposes to strengthen the use of C&I for planning rational use of forests, designing of SFM policies, and monitoring the best use of forests.

*To minimize the effects on the environment of FAO work methods and contribute to climate neutrality, a limited number of copies of this document have been published. We encourage delegates and observers to print up their own copies and bring them to the meetings and not request additional ones. Most of the documents for the FAO meeting are available online at: [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)*

5. The outcome of this workshop, together with the results of other three regional workshops (Africa, Asia and Near East/North Africa), other global meetings and the data gathered during the first phase of the Project, were presented at the World Forestry Congress side events held in September 2015 in Durban, South Africa.

*6. Delegates expressed appreciation for FAO's initiative in drawing up voluntary guidelines, which should be adopted according to the situation of each country. They also requested support in applying these guidelines in national wildfire prevention and control programmes. expressed (Par. 55). The Commission recommended that the traditional use of fire in agricultural practices should be taken into account and said that it is therefore important in these specific cases to support capacity building for the appropriate use of fire (Par. 56). The Commission recommended that FAO should promote South-South Cooperation on fire prevention and control, in terms both of training and exchange of equipment. In this connection, international agreements facilitating such exchanges should be promoted (Par. 57).*

### **Forest Fires and Forest Health**

7. The 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the LACFC recommended to update the regional forest fire management strategy, as well as to work on the prevention of forest pests and diseases. The regional forest fire management strategy review process began in 2014 and the document is in process of completion. The process has been led by the US Forest Service through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) based in Costa Rica, and with FAO's technical inputs.

8. In the framework of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), it was decided to update the regional forest health strategy. Technical support was offered by FAO and the US Forest Service. The review process of this strategy will begin in September or October 2015 and is expected to conclude in 2016.

*9. The delegates requested FAO to provide ongoing advice and also facilitate the sharing of experience in these working areas. Other issues to be addressed are the tenure of forest resources, rights of possession, the declaration of protected areas, community negotiation processes and the co-administration and co-management of public natural resources with the participation of beneficiaries (Par. 45).*

### **Project "Integration of Protected Areas in the Amazon Biome (IAPA) - Amazon Vision"**

10. The Amazon Vision project was launched in February 2014. Its objective is to contribute to the implementation of the protected areas management agreement on the Amazon biome. The project has five components: (i) institutional coordination of protected areas' services; (ii) conservation under landscape approach; (iii) governance, participation, equality and shared benefits; (iv) financial sustainability; and (v) project management assessment. The project is being implemented in eight countries in the Amazon region: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela, in collaboration with IUCN, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

### **"Ensuring Long-term Productivity in Caribbean Lowland Forests" Project**

11. Considering that tropical forests in the Caribbean lowlands have been subject, for centuries, to forest exploitation, with intensity of wood harvesting varying from country to country, the project has the following objectives: (i) develop management guidelines for secondary forests; (ii) investigate how to prevent degradation of these forests; and (iii) estimate the economic benefits of the application of silvicultural measures, considering possible payments by REDD+. The three-year project, financed by the German Government with an overall budget of USD1.3 million, will be implemented in Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Belize.

*12. The Commission recommended the establishment of a database of exemplary cases of sustainable forest management as a tool for collaboration and the promulgation of successful results of such programmes, which should also include community forestry (Par. 50).*

### **Exemplary Cases of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), Phase II**

13. The expected outcome of the project is to strengthen policies, national and sub-national plans and programmes of SFM. The project is underway in four of the six countries involved: Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Uruguay. Due to institutional issues, the project has not yet been implemented in Brazil and Argentina.

14. The expected project outputs are: (i) the design and implementation of a virtual platform for promoting a community of practice on sustainable forest management (already registered: 116 participants from 17 countries); (ii) discuss on the methodological process for identifying the exemplary cases of SFM (national workshops and second edition of the e-learning training course); and (iii) the completion of the nominations, assessment and selection process of new exemplary cases. In total, 31 new cases have been selected (12 in Guatemala, 10 in Costa Rica, two from Uruguay and seven from Chile).

15. The activities of the project are: (1) edition of a new publication on cases and lessons learned (to be launched in 2016); and (2) organization of national and regional roundtables, for debate and analysis about forest policies and measures for improving the application of SFM at national and sub-national level.

*16. The Commission recommended to the Regional Conference to stress among its member countries the contribution of forests to reduce poverty and food insecurity, to improve and protect livelihoods, and to guarantee sustainable productive agro-silvopastoral systems. In this context, the Commission reinforced the importance of forest ecosystem services for the development of agricultural and livestock activities (Par. 29). FAO was requested to continue with building up technical and institutional capacities for the valuation of the ecosystem services of forests and trees outside forests, and their importance for food security (Par. 70).*

### **Agro-environmental Policies in Latin America, Phase II**

17. The general objective of this project is to enhance agro-environmental policies that foster good management and the increase of rural incomes in harmony with the environment and the conservation of ecosystems, in order to reduce rural poverty and food insecurity in the Region. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Brazil, and in coordination with the Ministries of Agriculture of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Nicaragua, and the integration into Phase II in Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay.

18. Through the dialogue process, the preparation of a draft proposal for the Voluntary Guidelines for Agro-environmental Policies for Latin America and the Caribbean is now in the final stage. The proposed guidelines are presented as an instrumental framework aimed to contribute to reaching the goals of the post-2015 global development agenda.

19. Progress is also being made in four new countries included in the project, to systematize cases of policies/programs with an agro-environmental perspective to enrich knowledge exchange, regional dialogue and lessons learned.

### **United Nations Collaborative Programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Development Countries (UN-REDD Programme)**

20. The UN-REDD programme was launched in 2008, with its first phase ending in 2015. The strategy for the second phase is currently being drawn up and is expected to be implemented between 2016 and 2020. The initiative supports the preparation processes for REDD+ in developing countries, generating knowledge, sharing experiences and lessons learned in its four components<sup>1</sup>. In the framework of the Programme, FAO is the leading agency in the capacity building process to develop forestry emissions baselines, national forest monitoring systems (satellite land monitoring system, national forest inventory and national inventory of greenhouse gas emissions), to enhance the legal framework for REDD+ and issues associated with safeguards information system.

21. The programme supports 17 Member Nations in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Suriname), through national programmes, targeted support and skills development needs assessments. There are currently seven national programmes underway (Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Panama and Paraguay), and the following are being developed: (i) two additional national programmes (Chile and Peru); (ii) nine support programmes (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Surinam); and (iii) three needs assessments (Guatemala, Peru and Mesoamerica).

22. Under the UN-REDD programme, FAO is also promoting South-South Cooperation in the areas of forest monitoring and collaboration with national, regional and global projects on, for example: (i) “Strengthening the REDD+ preparation process in Mexico and facilitate the South-South Cooperation” project, (ii) the “Monitoring and Assessment of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigation Potential in Agriculture (MAGHG)” project; (iii) the Forestry and Farm Facility (FFF), and iv) and the EU FAO FLEGT Programme.

### **Global Environment Facility (GEF) Projects with Forest Components**

23. With GEF financial support, FAO is boosting projects in countries of the Region that link global environmental issues, sustainable use of forests and biodiversity conservation with poverty and food insecurity reduction while seeking to improve and protect livelihoods and guarantee productive and sustainable agro-forestry-livestock systems. The following projects were launched in 2015:

- Formulation and implementation of the national strategy on invasive alien species in Argentina. The project is being executed by the *Secretaría Nacional de Medio Ambiente* of Argentina.
- Forestry Information System (SIMEF) in Chile, whose objective is to increase the coverage of the country’s national forest inventory, including the islands, and aspects related to carbon and biodiversity. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the *Instituto Forestal* (INFOR), the *Corporación Nacional Forestal* (CONAF), and the Ministry of the Environment.
- Sustainable forest management and conservation with an ecosocial approach in Venezuela, whose objective is to provide support to institutions and community organizations in adopting information management innovation, incentive schemes, participatory governance, in order to recover degrading areas in representative forest ecosystems in Venezuela.
- Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, forests, soil and water as a means of good life or living well Sumac Kawsay) in the province of Napo, Ecuador, with the objective of increasing and improving the supply of sustainably produced agricultural, livestock and forestry goods and services, by means of strategic investment of public resources,

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<sup>1</sup> Elements of the REDD+ initiative: 1) National strategy/Action Plan; 2) Benchmarks for forest emissions; 3) National forest monitoring systems; and 4) Safeguards information systems.

participatory environmental governance, the application of incentive mechanisms, and bio-trade.

### **Small Forestry Businesses Development Programme**

24. The expert meeting for the “Creation of an enable environment for marketing lumber from community forests by community-based forest enterprises (CBFEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean”, was held in Santiago, Chile, from 26 to 28 November, 2014. The event was attended by 20 experts from 14 countries of the Region, drew on regional case studies and reports prepared by FAO and Forest Trends. The main objective of the meeting was to formulate a programme for the development of small forestry enterprises and provide a forum for experts to discuss the limitations and challenges, enabling political, institutional and economic factors, possible funding sources, implementation and coordination mechanisms, adequate approaches for capturing, documenting and monitoring contributions to improve the livelihoods of local communities and reduce poverty. The meeting concluded with a proposed roadmap to develop and implement a regional program to support small forestry enterprises.

25. Drawing on the outcome of the regional expert meeting held in Santiago, FAO is preparing a proposal for a regional forest-based small-scale enterprises development programme that will include a resource mobilization strategy. A draft version of this proposal is now available.

### **Forestry Education in Latin America**

26. Under the coordination of FAO, the *Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina* of Peru, the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and the National Forestry and Wildlife Service of Peru, the “Regional Latin American Forestry Education Workshop”, was held in December 8 to 10, 2014, in Lima, Peru, with a total of 80 participants from 15 countries, among them representatives of 24 universities of the Region.

27. The main objective of the workshop was to organize a regional discussion forum on forest education and research, drawing on an evaluation of the current status of forestry education and the outlook for the next 50 years. The outputs of this meeting included: (i) analysis of the current status of forestry education in the Region; (ii) proposed curriculum; and (iii) recommendations for advancing forestry education in countries in the Region.

**28. *The Commission recognized that the issues related with tenure and governance presented by the Secretariat showed FAO’s interest in highlighting the importance of the social aspects affecting or conditioning sustainable forest management. It requested FAO to provide support on this issue. In this context it referred to the importance of making progress on implementing the EU FAO FLEGT Programme (Par. 43).***

### **Forest and Farm Facility (FFF)**

29. In the framework of the Forest and Farm Facility and in collaboration with the Mexican Network of Rural Forest Organizations (MOCAF Network), the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) and the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR) of Mexico, the “International Workshop for Sharing Experiences in Community Land Management, Forest Governance and Linkages to Markets” was held in Mexico, from 3 to 7 August, 2015.

30. Different actors from Costa Rica, Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Chile and Mexico, namely representatives of indigenous and rural organizations, producers, intellectuals, technical experts, NGO representatives, politicians, agribusiness entrepreneurs, and government officials attended the event. The workshop outputs include: (i) a report on successful experiences and lessons learned from different countries related to community management, forest governance and linkages with markets;

(ii) policy guidelines to promote and improve community management and forest governance; and (iii) key messages for presentation at the World Forestry Congress and at the Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

**31. *Delegates requested FAO's support in order to have more information and capacity building to respond to the new requirements for wood exportation to Europe, considering the fact that FAO has a technical cooperation project within FLEGT (Par. 23).***

### **EU FAO FLEGT Programme**

32. The programme has provided support to 18 initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2013, allocating USD 1.3 million in direct assistance to national civil society organizations, government agencies, private sector organizations and representatives of indigenous communities. The programme addresses the following key areas: (i) transparency and traceability use of wood and forest products by improving information management systems; and (ii) improvement of legal frameworks. Examples of this direct assistance include: the development of legislation to guarantee free, prior and informed consent for the indigenous people of Honduras and the development of mechanisms for multi-sector dialogue on key issues related to forest governance in each country, including use rights.

33. The EU FAO FLEGT programme is entering its third phase with the financial support of the Swedish parliament and government (SIDA) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union. A new strategic approach will be put into practice in September 2015 for the next four years, with priorities that include institutional capacity- building, cross-boundary transparency and collaboration, the involvement of the private sector, in particular SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), and support to regional initiatives such as PERFOR (Central American Strategic Programme for Forest Ecosystem Management), with the objective of aligning national efforts to improve forest governance.

**34. *The Commission recommended that FAO should develop guidelines on the legal aspects of tenure, valuation of ecosystem services, land-use planning and responsible management of land for forest, agricultural and livestock use (Par. 44).***

### **The Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism (FLRM)**

35. See document FO:LACFC/2015/6 - Forest and landscape restoration.

**36. *The Commission requested FAO to distribute the sustainable forest management toolbox as widely as possible when it is ready, so it can be widely used (Par. 51).***

37. A detailed report on the progress in developing the Toolbox is contained in Annex A to this report.

**38. *Delegates recommended FAO ensure that the plan of action receives wide distribution; and to support countries in the implementation of this plan, taking into account the specific features of the various countries and national strategies, including the mobilization of financial resources (Par. 61).***

39. The detailed report on the work related to the Global Plan of Action on Forest Genetic Resources is presented in Annex B.

**40. *The Commission requested FAO's support in collecting information on successful experiences and making use of existing platforms to share experience on forest monitoring (Par. 66).***

41. The results of the work on the Voluntary Guidelines on National Forestal Monitoring are presented in Annex C.

*42. The Secretariat reported on progress in the identification of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their indicators related to forests. Noting that the process is being coordinated by the UNFF Secretariat, delegates recommended that FAO to play a major role in identifying the SDGs and convey the suggestion of its member countries to the process (Par. 38).*

43. See document FO:LACFC/2015/4 - Global political processes: United Nations Forum on Forests, Sustainable Development Goals, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

*44. In relation to the regional figures and data presented, it was pointed out that regional figures hide the differences among subregions and countries. There are countries where national trends differ from the regional ones. The Commission, therefore, requested FAO's support in improving the generation of data and information related to forests (Par. 14).*

45. See document FO:LACFC/2015/2 - FRA 2015 and the State of the Forest Sector in the Region

#### **Points for consideration**

46. The Commission is invited to consider this report and advise FAO on further work. The attention of the Commission is drawn in particular to the points presented for consideration in Annexes A – C.

## **Annex A. Sustainable Forest Management Toolbox**

### **Background**

The Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Toolbox was developed in response to the request of the Committee on Forestry.

The aim of this note is to summarize the key issues in the further development of the SFM Toolbox.

### **What it is**

The SFM Toolbox is a comprehensive technical package of knowledge tools, good practices, and examples of their application to facilitate the implementation of SFM under varied contexts. Its target audience is primarily (public and private) forest and land managers, and those who support them including extension services, civil-society organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as private sector associations.

The Toolbox has the following objectives: (i) increase capacities to effectively implement SFM by providing practical knowledge, tools and experiences at local and landscape levels; (ii) support forest managers and other stakeholders in progressing towards SFM with a more comprehensive approach; (iii) connect the different areas of FAO expertise related to SFM to facilitate its integration in a landscape approach to natural resources management; and (iv) identify and address knowledge and tool gaps, as well as possible incoherencies and conflicts.

The Toolbox is a user-friendly, interactive web-based platform, responsive to user's interests and needs. It includes:

- modules on SFM thematic areas, comprising (i) an overview of basic knowledge; (ii) more in-depth information; (iii) links to related tools; and (iv) links to SFM cases/examples and further references;
- a database of SFM tools and cases/examples that have been collated and arranged in an easy-to-access format; and
- a discussion forum.

The Toolbox uses knowledge references, tools and cases produced by FAO, Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members, other partners and member countries. The scope of the Toolbox is global (for all types of forests) however it will be an evolving set that will also include regional and national resources.

The development of the SFM Toolbox aligns with FAO's mandate and role as a knowledge organization. FAO, in collaboration with its many partners, creates, compiles and shares critical information about SFM, and facilitates a dialogue between those who possess the knowledge and those who need it, aiming at "turning knowledge into action". The Toolbox is included in the Organization's Strategic Objective 2, outcome 1 under Products & Services 5 *Knowledge management: Participatory assessment, development, and promotion of mechanisms for collating, managing and sharing knowledge on sustainable production and natural resources management practices.*

The SFM Toolbox website has been designed with the intention of allowing best interaction with users. It is available at <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-forest-management/toolbox/>.



### **Current status and main issues**

The SFM Toolbox is a work in progress so its further development between July 2014 and August 2015 continued with the preparation of 15 additional modules, the addition of tools and cases to the existing modules (it currently contains 620 tools and 524 cases) and the improvement of the web-platform (e.g., usability, simplified registration system, revision of module filters, video translation, etc.).

The testing of the website is ongoing (in early 2015, a heuristic evaluation focusing on the user experience and information architecture of the Toolbox; and during the XIV WFC a user interface testing with a broad spectrum of participants) and the results will contribute to the improvement of the accessibility and usability of the site (e.g. retrieving and utilizing tools, modules and cases on specific forest management issues) and to users' understanding of what it offers.

The SFM Toolbox continues to be disseminated and promoted through (demo) presentations in international and national meetings, flyers (in EN, FR and SP), links with other online websites/tools and communications in various networks (e.g. TECA, NWFP, FRA, inFO news...). Since its launch in June 2014 there have been 14,500 users and over 55,000 page views.

The SFM Toolbox is being increasingly promoted as a key reference of FAO's work on several thematic areas as well as a learning source for project design and implementation.

### **Points for consideration**

The Committee may wish to invite countries to promote the use of the SFM Toolbox to support planning and implementation of SFM-related programs/initiatives, for institutional strengthening, capacity development and others; and to provide further feedback to the Toolbox, including new tools and SFM cases.

The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to continue support the development and dissemination of the TB.

## **Annex B. Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources**

### **Introduction**

In 2007, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) requested FAO to prepare *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources (SoW-FGR)*<sup>2</sup> and established, in 2009, an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (ITWG-FGR) to guide the preparation of this report. In 2011, the CGRFA also requested FAO to prepare a synthesis paper on priority areas for action based on the information gathered for the SoW-FGR and the ITWG-FGR to review it. In April 2013, the CGRFA agreed the identified priority areas as *the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources (GPA-FGR)*<sup>3</sup> and in June 2013, the FAO Conference adopted the document<sup>4</sup>.

The GPA-FGR identifies four priority areas for action: 1) Improving the availability of, and access to, information regarding FGR, 2) Conservation of FGR (*in situ* and *ex situ*), 3) Sustainable use, development and management of FGR, and 4) Policies, institutions and capacity building. Under these areas, the GPA-FGR includes a total of 27 strategic priorities for action at the national, regional and international levels. The relative priority of each strategic priority and associated actions may differ significantly in different countries and regions. The GPA-FGR is a voluntary and non-binding document that can be updated by the CGRFA. The implementation of the GPA-FGR will strengthen sustainable management of forests and contribute towards the post-2015 development agenda and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Activities on FGR are an integral part of the FAO's work in forestry and they are regularly reported to the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Regional Forestry Commissions. At its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session in June 2014, COFO welcomed the SoW-FGR and the GPA-FGR, and acknowledged the importance of FAO's work in this area. The COFO recommended FAO to support the implementation of the GPA-FGR, finalize the draft strategy for the implementation of the GPA-FGR for review by the CGRFA, encourage continued cooperation in addressing the global priorities of the GPA-FGR, and support countries as appropriate to address the strategic priorities of the GPA-FGR. This document presents information on follow-up to the GPA-FGR since the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of COFO.

### **Follow-up to the Global Plan of Action**

At its 3<sup>rd</sup> Session in July 2014, the ITWG-FGR considered the draft implementation strategy for the GPA-FGR and made several recommendations<sup>5</sup>. The ITWG-FGR recommended that FAO encourage its Members to develop national plans of action for the conservation, sustainable use and development of FGR. It also stressed the need to create linkages between these national plans and the National Forest Programmes, the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and other relevant planning processes.

At its 15<sup>th</sup> Session in January 2015, the CGRFA further considered the draft implementation strategy for the GPA-FGR and adopted the implementation strategy<sup>6</sup>. It includes seven areas of action: 1) Advocacy and international awareness on FGR, 2) Development and support of relevant global and regional networks, 3) Supporting countries in the development of national and regional strategies for the implementation of the GPA-FGR, 4) Supporting countries in securing adequate and sustainable

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<sup>2</sup> SoW-FGR. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3825e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> GPA-FGR. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3849e.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> C 2013/REP, paragraph 77. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/028/mh093e.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> CGRFA/WG-FGR-3/14/Report, paragraphs 13-15. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml401e.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> CGRFA-15/15/Report, Appendix E. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm660e.pdf>

funding for the implementation of the GPA-FGR, 5) Development of international technical standards for FGR and support to implement them, 6) Funding strategy for the implementation of the GPA-FGR, and 7) Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the GPA-FGR and the status and trends of FGR. The CGRFA stressed that the strategy is fundamental for achieving the goals of the GPA-FGR and called for the implementation of the strategy in coordination with the COFO and relevant international organizations.

FAO has continued cooperation with relevant partners, such as Bioversity International and the World Agroforestry Centre, in addressing the global priorities of the GPA-FGR. This cooperation was crucial for the preparation of the SoW-FGR and related thematic studies, and it will be also crucial for the implementation of the GPA-FGR at the international level. In December 2014, the results of the earlier collaboration were published in a special issue of *Forest Ecology and Management*<sup>7</sup>. The global reviews on various issues related to FGR provide valuable information for the implementation of the GPA-FGR in addition to the SoW-FGR. FAO is also strengthening its collaboration on FGR with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other relevant members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), as well as various international and regional organizations.

Regional coordination is necessary for effective implementation of regional and national priorities of the GPA-FGR as the distribution ranges of forest trees and their genetic resources typically extend beyond individual countries. Regional networks on FGR play a crucial role for this purpose by providing a platform for countries to share experiences, exchange information and develop collaborative actions. In September 2014, the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutes (APAFRI) and Bioversity International organized, with technical inputs from FAO, a regional workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the national coordinators of the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN). The workshop prepared a strategy for regional collaboration to implement the GPA-FGR. In October 2014, Bioversity organized a similar workshop in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia in collaboration with the Latin America Forest Genetic Resources Network (LAFORGEN), and with financial and technical support from Spain. FAO and its partners are planning to organize similar planning workshops in other regions, subject to the availability of financial resources. In Europe, FAO will continue its long-lasting collaboration with the European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) which has already agreed to contribute to the implementation of the GPA-FGR during its Phase V (2015-2019).

FAO has also contributed to the work of regional networks dedicated to combat invasive species affecting FGR. These networks aim to facilitate sharing of information and mobilizing resources, raising awareness and bringing together experts, institutions and other stakeholders concerned with forest invasive species. In November 2014, FAO organized, in collaboration with the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, a regional seminar in Beijing, China for the national focal points of the Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN). FAO and its partners intend to rejuvenate the Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa (FISNA), the Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species (NENFHIS) and Red de Países del Cono Sur sobre Especies Exóticas Invasoras a Ecosistemas Forestales which includes the South Cone countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) and Bolivia. Furthermore, FAO organized a regional seminar in Budapest, Hungary in June 2015 for European and Central Asian countries to promote the implementation of the phytosanitary standards in forestry. As a follow-up to this meeting, FAO is planning, in collaboration with its partners, to establish a network on forest invasive species for Europe and Central Asia. In addition, FAO and its partners are considering initiating a similar network in the Central American and Caribbean region.

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<sup>7</sup> Global Forest Genetic Resources : Taking Stock (special issue of *Forest Ecology and Management*) (open access). <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03781127/333>

Bioversity International organized, with technical inputs from FAO, a side event on the GPA-FGR during the IUFRO World Congress, held in Salt Lake City, USA in October 2014. In May 2015, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Institute for Forests (EMBRAPA Florestas) and FAO organized an International Symposium on Forest Biotechnology for Smallholders in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. FAO will continue, together with its partners, contributing to this type of events to facilitate sharing of information and raising awareness on the conservation, sustainable use and development of FGR, subject to the availability of financial resources.

FAO is continuing to explore the interest of different donors to support countries in implementing the GPA-FGR. In collaboration with selected countries and partner organizations, FAO has developed and submitted project proposals to donors and is now waiting for their response. Countries can also seek financial support for relevant projects through the decentralized FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

### **Points for consideration**

The Regional Forestry Commissions may wish to:

- Recommend that countries take action, as appropriate, to implement the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources;
- Recommend that countries support, as appropriate, the regional networks on FGR and forest invasive species, and contribute to the activities of these networks to strengthen regional collaboration in these areas.

The Regional Forestry Commissions may wish to recommend FAO to:

- Continue supporting the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Forest Genetic Resources.

## **Annex C. Progress Report on the Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring**

### **Background**

During the Twenty-First session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO 21), member countries recommended that FAO continue to support countries strengthen national forest information systems and requested FAO to “work in close collaboration with member countries and relevant organizations to prepare a set of voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring, which takes into account the requirements for REDD+ reporting and is in line with the principles and goals of the Forest Instrument”<sup>8</sup>.

The preparation process started just after the request from COFO 21, with the route map and the definition of the structure of the document. A two phase approach was defined to divide the process, Phase I comprised the development of section I and II with the definition of national forest monitoring, the scope and the principles; Phase II comprising of a compilation of good practices and technical recommendations on national forest monitoring.

COFO 22 endorsement of section I and II prepared in Phase I was an important step and milestone in the preparation process and highly related with the final version of the document. These two first sections provide background, the definition of forest monitoring and the principles for a national forest monitoring system which are the key elements guiding the technical recommendations and further development of the document.

As defined in the first sections of the voluntary guidelines, national forest monitoring is viewed as a comprehensive process that includes the collection, analysis and dissemination of forest-related data and the derivation of information and knowledge at regular intervals to allow monitoring of changes over time, and which focuses on national level data and information on forests and trees outside forests, their condition, values and uses. The timely, relevant and reliable information obtained supports forest-related decision making at the national and sub-national levels.

Fourteen principles were introduced in these sections: country ownership and responsibility; legal basis; national forest monitoring needs a landscape view; national forest monitoring should be institutionalized; research infrastructure and capacity building should be taken in consideration; it needs to be a participatory discussion process among national stakeholders on the scope and objectives of forest monitoring; the national forest monitoring must satisfy national level information needs; there should be integration of and consistency with existing information sources; a flexible approach in order to integrate emerging issues and allow for periodic revisions; a national forest monitoring should follow a multi-purpose approach; the feasibility including cost-efficiency should be taken in consideration; it should include a well-defined data and information sharing policy; has credibility through transparency and quality; and promote collaboration at international level.

This note provides an overview of the process up today and the next steps to finalize the document.

### **Progress to Date and Next Steps**

The development and dissemination of the voluntary guidelines on national forest monitoring was included in FAO’s new strategic framework and the programme of work for the present biennium under Strategic Objective 2: Increased and improved provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner, output 2.4.2: methodologies, norms, standards, definitions and other tools for the collection, management, aggregation and analysis of data are formulated and disseminated.

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<sup>8</sup> FAO (Food And Agriculture Organization of The United Nations). 2012. Report on the Committee on Forestry, Twenty-First Session: COFO 2012/REP paragraf 50, page 7. Rome, Italy. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/026/me988e.pdf>

The first two sections were endorsed by the COFO 22 during the last session. For the preparation of these two sections, inputs from FAO member countries and relevant organizations were included, based on discussions, feedback and exchanges during the last six Regional Forestry Commissions (2013-2014), the FRA regional meetings and different technical meetings held during 2013 and 2014, and inputs from several member countries during COFO 22.

The section III is currently being finalized by FAO in collaboration with international experts. The section is based on a thorough literature review as well as on inputs provided in international workshops and technical meetings, which have taken place in 2014 and 2015. Valuable contribution and advice has been received also from many institutional stakeholders.

During the first three weeks of October 2015, an online consultation on the final section will be open for a wider number of experts for a drafting process allowing them to contribute and share opinions which will be taken into consideration during the final stage of preparation of the document. This process will allow broader awareness raising and buy in on the voluntary guidelines by national stakeholders. The online consultation and the draft version of the document will be available at <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/forestry>.

As a final step of the preparation of the document, a face-to-face meeting will be organized by the beginning of 2016 to gather feedback from international experts and potential users of the voluntary guidelines.