

25th Session of the Committee on Forestry – written correspondence procedure

Item 9.4 Preparations for the XV World Forestry Congress

Secretariat response to written questions from the Committee

The Secretariat expresses its appreciation for the comments received from Members on item 9.4 of the Agenda - *Preparations for the XV World Forestry Congress*. All comments are well noted.

Intervention of Switzerland:

The comment of Switzerland is much appreciated and taken as an encouragement for the Congress to continue to pursue the forest – sustainable development relationships and pay particular attention to the implications of the pandemic, as suggested by one of the Congress' objectives and in the topics suggested to be discussed in particular under subthemes 3, 4 and 6, as well as the related special events. Similarly, the note on the role of WFC in helping to establish a more effective interface between science policy and finance appears to support the aspirations behind proposing in particular topics to be discussed in particular in sub-theme 5 and 3 as well as three special events including the suggested ministerial forum.

Republic of Korea:

The leadership role of Korea represented by the Korea Forest Service is much respected and appreciated. The suggested presentation is representing a key element for the Committee's considerations in providing a guidance for the Congress preparations.

The comment on sponsorship supports the related recommendation in the document. The recommendation for the new action item fits very well to the existing invitations to members and can be included in that section, should it enjoy the support of the Committee.

China:

The support expressed in the comment is much appreciated and so is the information on the consideration of sending a high-level delegation to the Congress. Please be advised that the WFC Secretariat teams from FAO and the Republic of Korea, represented by the Korea Forest Service (KFS) will give a presentation during the discussion of agenda item 9.4 in order to inform the Committee and to provide logistical support and guidance for those who have interest in the Congress to be able to participate with a view to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The comment on the role of forests and forestry in sustainable development and specifically in rebuilding from COVID-19 is well noted and understood as a support to the Congress' theme and key objective which stretches across the different sub-themes. Several of the sub-themes and special events are designed to address also the particular challenges and opportunities arising from the pandemic in building back better.

Australia:

The support expressed to the ongoing preparations is well noted and immensely appreciated and serves as an encouragement for the further work. The secretariat teams are working hard on finalizing the programme and notes the need to share information early on planned ministerial/senior official programmes. The related events are being designed as we speak and information will start to be released after the plans will be carefully reviewed.

The recommendation to look beyond the boundaries of the traditional forest stakeholder groups is well noted. Paragraph 16 of the document identifies some of these but the list is by far not complete and misses for example the Global Food Systems Summit 2021, which is duly considered in the preparations. Should the Committee wish to do so, the related recommendation can be amended according to the valuable proposal of Australia.

European Union:

The comments by the EU are much appreciated. We take encouragement from the support to the recommendation for introducing the Congress' outcomes to COFO and the RFCs with a view to use these outcomes where relevant and as appropriate for the work of the organization in forestry matters. We also appreciate the support expressed to the development of a vision document in an inclusive and transparent manner, keeping in mind the character of the Congress.

Peru:

The questions from Peru are much appreciated. As it is reflected in the key theme and sub-themes of the Congress, the topics listed in the questions are all included in the various sub-themes, however it is too early to tell what the outcome of the considerations of the Congress will be. We are very grateful however for these questions because they can very usefully support the preparations for the different sessions and serve as a checklist of key issues that would require attention of the global forestry community.

Russian Federation:

The proposal for using all FAO official languages is well noted and much appreciated.

Principles of organizing World Forestry Congresses have been laid down and reviewed by the FAO Council, originally in 1974 and reviewed subsequently. Member countries willing to host a congress should submit their bids following those guidelines, as it was the case in 2016, when the current host submitted its bid and was finally selected by the FAO Council at its 155th Session. In the absence of specific ruling on the languages all bids have followed the established practice of using 3 languages that has been exercised for several years now. In case this practice would need to be changed that would require a revision of the related guidelines. Would this be the wish of the Committee on Forestry, it could recommend such a revision to be conducted in time for being taken into consideration when the call for hosting the next Congress will be released.

Preparations for the Congress are proceeding with full speed in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic. As the future development of the pandemic is highly unknown, different scenarios will need to be developed, from the business as usual to the virtualization of the event. The feasibility and desirability of these scenarios are currently being evaluated with technical details considered and relevant information will be released through the Congress website and other channels available for the secretariat. To be able to find the best and most satisfying solution the secretariat is also consulting organizers of other major global events to learn from their examples and or thinking and will inform members as soon as possible.

Indonesia:

The position of Indonesia is much appreciated and considered as a strong guidance to follow the established path. Special considerations are given to absorbing the impact of the pandemic and the host country is doing its utmost to support this. Some measures have already been communicated on the Congress' website while others are still being considered.

Indonesia's support to the Congress presented in the document is highly appreciated.

Mexico:

Mexico's efforts to publicize the Congress and the support to the recommendations contained in document 9.4 are much appreciated.

The proposal is much appreciated. We would like to confirm that the post-COVID developments are considered duly I the Congress' subthemes and appear in multiple dimensions. One of the Congress' stated objectives is to "consider the state and future of world forestry, particularly in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals". This is expected to be done on multiple ways. In subtheme 3 under forests and sustainable development there is one topic on managing the economic and business impact post-COVID-19: opportunities to build back better. In subtheme 4 under Forest, human health and well-being it is suggested to consider forest loss and disease transmission: reflections on the CPOVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, one special event will be devoted to the topic of forests in the post-COVID world. We understand the comment as a confirmation of this approach.

Turkey:

We very much look forward to Turkey's leadership in NEFRC and gratefully acknowledge the invitation to the proposed side event.