



# COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

## WORKING GROUP ON DRYLAND FORESTS AND AGROSILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS

### Inaugural Session

Rome, 16-17 July 2019

### Report

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Inaugural Session of the Committee on Forestry's Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems was held at FAO headquarters (Italy) from 16 to 17 July 2019.
2. The session was attended by 20 member countries, two intergovernmental organizations and two non-governmental organizations. The list of participants is provided in Appendix 1. and Appendix 2.

## II. OPENING OF THE SESSION (Item 1)

3. The Secretary of the Working Group, Ms Fidaa F. Haddad, opened the meeting.
4. Mr Hiroto Mitsugi, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, welcomed participants. He noted that the Working Group's work, expertise, and knowledge would help the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and its members make better informed policies and take further actions regarding sustainable management of drylands and agrosilvopastoral systems. Moreover, Mr Mitsugi highlighted that the Working Group, as a subsidiary body of COFO, has a key role in guiding and advising on the implementation of the GEF-7 Sustainable Forest Management on Dryland Landscapes Impact Program, and providing a valuable programmatic approach to promote coherence and coordination among the individual country programmes operating across the dryland regions, as well as to its global component.

### **III. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS (Item 2)**

5. The Working Group elected Mr Ezekiel MWAKALUKWA of Tanzania as Chairperson.
6. Mr Chadi MOHANNA of Lebanon, and Mr Dominique LOUPPE of France were elected as Vice-Chairpersons.
7. In taking up his position, Mr Ezekiel Mwakalukwa thanked FAO for securing the extra-budgetary funds to organize the inaugural meeting of the Working Group. He emphasized the importance for the Working Group to provide technical advice to COFO on the status, trends, issues, development in Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems. He also encouraged the observers to actively participate in the discussions and to provide their expertise.

### **IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 3)**

8. The Working Group adopted the Agenda, as contained in Appendix 3.
9. The Working Group acknowledged its Terms of Reference (ToR), as adopted by the Committee on Forestry (COFO).
10. Considering the limited time available for the translation of the report during the two-day session, the Working Group agreed to receive the draft report of the session in English only for consideration and adoption. The final report would be published in three languages.

### **V. DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE DRYLAND FORESTS AND AGROSILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP (Item 4)**

11. The secretariat presented a proposal on the Rules of Procedure for the Working Group's consideration and review.
  12. The Working Group endorsed the role of observers to provide notes and advice during the discussion sessions. It recommended that this be reflected in its Rules of Procedure.
- It also proposed amendments to the text (FO:COFO/WG-DF/2019/4 ) and requested the secretariat to submit the draft Rules of Procedure for approval to the Committee on Forestry at its next session.
13. The secretariat indicated that all comments and suggestions for improvement would be taken into consideration in close collaboration with the Legal Counsel to ensure the consistency of the Working Group's Rules of Procedure with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization, as well as with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Forestry.

### **VI. FAO WORK ON DRYLAND FORESTS AND AGROSILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS (Item 5)**

#### **5a) FAO GLOBAL DRYLAND ASSESSMENT**

14. The Working Group took note of the methodology and tools used to collect data and information to support the assessment of dryland resources.
15. It emphasized the importance of relevant stakeholders and national experts in gathering and validating data for finalizing the assessment.
16. The Working Group recognized that inconsistencies between some of the results from the First Global Dryland Assessment and the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) are mainly due

to differences in methodologies and definitions applied at the country level, and recommended that FAO:

- a) integrate field data and local knowledge in any future assessment through the contribution of national experts and databases;
- b) further develop the assessment methodology in order to facilitate its alignment with international reporting processes;
- c) add qualitative data that can help answer key issues related to dryland management, dynamic and uses;
- d) further collaborate with other regional and global assessment initiatives;
- e) improve the global drylands assessment analysis by including the presumed drylands;
- f) publish the report in a major international event to highlight the importance of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems in climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
- g) support countries in strengthening their national capacities in dryland monitoring and assessment and in using forest monitoring tools, platform and methods.

17. The Working Group recommended that member countries:

- a) Further harmonize their forest and other woody vegetation classes definition and dryland monitoring methodologies and requested FAO to support such efforts;
- b) Use the results of the First Global Drylands Assessment Report to help align their policies regarding drylands with the broader sustainable development goals.

18. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to share more details of the above-mentioned inconsistencies. Members agreed to review these and to provide their additional observations and recommendations to the secretariat (at Drylands-WGCOFO@fao.org) by 30 August 2019.

## **5b) FAO ONGOING WORK INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS**

19. The Working Group acknowledged FAO's work in ensuring the sustainable management of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral landscapes, and FAO's leading efforts jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme to support the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

20. The Working Group emphasized the importance of sharing knowledge and lessons learned from initiatives in different regions.

21. It requested that FAO increase its efforts to replicate the successful initiatives and projects in different regions to ensure that the sustainable management of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems is enhanced and progress is made towards the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) target.

## **5c) KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND OUTREACH - DRYLAND RESTORATION INITIATIVE PLATFORM (DRIP)**

22. The Working Group considered the development of the platform for documenting and monitoring the different restoration initiatives implemented in dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems.

23. It advised that the development of this platform should be tested and linked with country data and information to strengthen the national and regional information systems to achieve land degradation neutrality in drylands.

24. The Working Group stressed the need for capacity development and recommended that FAO produce a user guide for the tool, to increase the capacity of countries in using DRIP.

## **5d) GEF-7 SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IMPACT PROGRAMME ON DRYLAND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES**

25. The Working Group congratulated FAO for being chosen to lead the GEF-7 Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes with country projects in Africa and Central Asia. The Working Group recognized its vital role as an inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder body established under the Committee on Forestry in providing guidance to the implementation of the Impact Program.
26. Given the follow-up needed, the Working Group recommended that its Steering Committee, in close collaboration with the eleven countries participating in the Impact Program coordinate closely with the Steering Committee of the Impact Program, and support the implementation of the Impact program at regional and global levels.
27. The Working Group agreed to consider and approve the reports of the Steering Committee of the Impact Program as stipulated in paragraph 136 of the Program Framework Document, approved by the GEF Council at its 56<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 11-13 June 2019.
28. The Working Group recommended that FAO, in coordination with the Steering Committee of the Working Group and subject to extra-budgetary resources, convene periodical meetings with countries participating in the Impact Program, to ensure the coherence, follow-up and dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned of the implementation of the Impact Program.
29. The Working Group agreed to provide technical advice on the implementation of the Impact Program to help enhance its overall coherence, ensure South-South cooperation, strengthen dialogue with relevant regional actors and facilitate the development of knowledge products, outreach and engagement at national and regional levels, and share knowledge of the results and lessons learned from the implementation of the Impact Program.
30. The Working Group recommended that FAO, upon country request, facilitate linkages and interactions between governmental units responsible for forestry and drylands and GEF to strengthen the implementation of the country programmes of GEF-7.
31. The Working Group requested its secretariat to disseminate the lessons learned from the implementation of the Impact Program to promote scaling-up of the adoption of good practices for the protection, sustainable management and restoration of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems that enhance environmental and socio-economic resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

## **VII. WORK PLAN FOR THE WORKING GROUP ON DRYLAND FORESTS AND AGROSILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS (Item 6)**

32. The Working Group considered its draft work plan and noted that it provides a timely response to the global challenges in dryland forest management towards achieving the Land Degradation Neutrality target and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
33. The Working Group reviewed the activities proposed by the Committee on Forestry as stated in the Terms of Reference. In addition, the Working Group appealed to donors and relevant international organizations to make extra-budgetary financial resources available to support the implementation of its work plan.
34. The Working Group recommended that an action be added to strengthen its collaboration with the Rio Conventions, the Green Climate Fund, and other relevant entities to achieve the SDGs.

35. The Working Group also recommended that a time frame be added to the work plan and requested the secretariat to finalize it under the guidance of the Steering Committee by 30 September 2019 and publish it on the Working Group's website.

### **VIII. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Item 7)**

36. The Working Group strongly encouraged countries to nominate their experts to act as Working Group members in supporting the technical mission of the COFO Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems taking into consideration gender balance.

37. The Working Group invited donors and countries to contribute to make extra-budgetary financial resources to support convening the next meeting.

38. The Working Group welcomed Tanzania's offer to host the next Working Group meeting and provide logistical support.

### **IX. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Item 8)**

39. The Working Group welcomed the offer on behalf of the League of Arab States to invite the Working Group Steering Committee to join the Arab Sustainable Development Week in Cairo, Egypt, scheduled to take place on 3-6 November 2019, as an opportunity to present the work of the Working Group to the Arab region.

### **X. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Item 9)**

40. The Working Group adopted the report as amended by consensus.

### **XI. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION (Item 10)**

41. In closing, the Chairperson closed the session at 15:30 on 17 July 2019.

## APPENDIX 1

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*APPENDIX 3***AGENDA**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Election of Officers
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Draft Rules of Procedures for the Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems Working Group
5. FAO work on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems
  - a) FAO Global Dryland Assessment
  - b) On-going work initiatives and projects
  - c) Knowledge management and outreach (Dryland Restoration Initiative Platform)
  - d) Sustainable Dryland Landscape Impact Program (GEF-7)
6. Work Plan of the Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems Working Group
7. Date and Place of the next Session
8. Any Other Business
9. Adoption of the Report
10. Closure of the Session