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Organization of the
United Nations

REPORT

Ulaanbaatar,
Mongolia
22-25
February
2022
(virtual
meeting)

**Asia-Pacific
Forestry
Commission**
Twenty-ninth session

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REPORT

of the

TWENTY-NINTH SESSION

of the

ASIA-PACIFIC FORESTRY COMMISSION

**Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
22-25 February 2022
(virtual meeting)**

**REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Bangkok, 2022**

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PREVIOUS SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION

First session	Bangkok, Thailand	9-17 October 1950
Second session	Singapore/Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1-13 December 1952
Third session	Tokyo, Japan	9-21 April 1955
Fourth session	Bandung, Indonesia	8-12 June 1957
Fifth session	New Delhi, India	12-18 February 1960
Sixth session	Hong Kong	12-17 September 1962
Seventh session	Rotorua, New Zealand	22 September-2 October 1964
Eighth session	Seoul, Republic of Korea	1-8 May 1969
Ninth session	Canberra, Australia	20-28 September 1973
Tenth session	Kathmandu, Nepal	6-10 June 1977
Eleventh session	Suva, Fiji	6-10 April 1981
Twelfth session	Bangkok, Thailand	19-23 March 1984
Thirteenth session	Beijing, China	30 March-3 April 1987
Fourteenth session	Manila, Philippines	12-16 March 1990
Fifteenth session	Colombo, Sri Lanka	9-13 August 1993
Sixteenth session	Yangon, Myanmar	15-20 January 1996
Seventeenth session	Yogyakarta, Indonesia	23-27 February 1998
Eighteenth session	Noosaville, Queensland, Australia	15-19 May 2000
Nineteenth session	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	26-30 August 2002
Twentieth session	Nadi, Fiji	19-23 April 2004
Twenty-first session	Dehradun, India	17-21 April 2006
Twenty-second session	Hanoi, Viet Nam	21-25 April 2008
Twenty-third session	Thimphu, Bhutan	9-11 June 2010
Twenty-fourth session	Beijing, China	7-11 November 2011
Twenty-fifth session	Rotorua, New Zealand	5-8 November 2013
Twenty-sixth session	Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines	22-26 February 2016
Twenty-seventh session	Colombo, Sri Lanka	24-27 October 2017
Twenty-eighth session	Incheon, Republic of Korea	17-21 June 2019

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For the attention of FAO

The Commission recommended:

- to support capacity building and provide technical assistance to underpin national efforts to enhance, redesign and implement policies and actions to upscale forest and landscape restoration (including agroforestry) and reduce deforestation and forest degradation, including in the context of green recovery actions;
- to support legal and sustainable forestry value chains with appropriate involvement of local communities, small-scale operators as well as women and youth, using innovative forest technologies and digital tools for improved transparency, monitoring and decision making;
- to strengthen the capacity of governments and relevant stakeholders as regards the sustainable management and use of forest biodiversity (including wildlife) and zoonotic disease prevention through the One Health approach;
- to further strengthen cross-sectoral work through activities aimed at halting deforestation and land degradation, and promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems;
- to continue to provide support to capacity building, technology transfer and mobilization of resources, to ensure continuing food security and rural development and ongoing development of the role REDD+ plays in this;
- to continue improving the FRA platform to support easy and transparent reporting on forest resources, their management and uses;
- to continue the work on improved reporting on primary forests and report the first results of the work in the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO);
- to complete the FRA Remote Sensing Survey and continue capacity development on remote sensing and data management, as well as facilitate related technology transfer;
- to circulate the draft scoping report of the APFC governance review for comments;
- to convene an informal consultation with nominated representatives from APFC Members and other stakeholders to further discuss and refine proposed options, including budgetary implications, to reform the APFC governance structure to provide greater relevance, efficiency and effectiveness;
- to report on progress made in the APFC governance review at its next session as well as to next session of COFO;
- to promote SOFO 2022 within and outside of the forestry sector;

- to take an active part in advancing the UN Secretary-General's Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation and related activities;
- to continue to take an active role as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and through this enhance advocacy on forests through relevant global processes and initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

1. At the invitation of the Government of Mongolia, the Twenty-ninth Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC) was held as a virtual session from 22 to 25 February 2022. Delegates from 23 member countries and 2 United Nations organizations participated in the Session, along with observers and representatives from 13 regional and international inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. A list of participants is given in Appendix B.

Opening ceremony

2. The opening ceremony featured addresses by the Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, the Deputy Director-General, FAO and the Minister for Environment and Tourism, Mongolia.

3. Mr Jong-Jin Kim, Assistant Director-General, FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific welcomed participants to the session. He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to the global economy, including the forest sector, and hence the theme of the 29th Session of the Commission, “*Forests and green recovery in Asia and the Pacific*” is very timely. He observed that forests offer a means for building back better in the aftermath of the pandemic, including creating jobs and income, reducing the risks of future outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, and mitigating the negative impacts of other global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss. He informed the Commission that the new FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031 reflects the Organization’s commitment to transformational change that ensures better agri-food production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. Mr Kim invited the Commission to share its outcomes at the forthcoming 36th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

4. Ms Maria Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General, told participants that the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the world into a global crisis never seen before. Progress in reducing poverty has slipped back, while hunger has increased worldwide. She noted the important role forests can play in tackling the crisis, including in helping to transform agri-food systems. She observed that building back better from the pandemic will require accelerating actions to turn the tide on deforestation and forest degradation and promotion of efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems that consider sustainable forest and landscape management, water conservation, and safeguard biodiversity. Ms Semedo highlighted FAO’s commitment to working together with Members to achieve these transformations and the aspirations of the “*Four Betters*”: better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life for all. As part of FAO’s new Strategic Framework 2022–2031, the Four Betters reflect the interconnected economic social and environmental dimensions of agrifood systems and their centrality to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5. Mr Oyunsanaa Byambasuren, Director General of the Department of Forest Policy and Coordination, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mongolia welcomed participants on behalf of His Excellency, Mr B. Bat-Erdene, Minister of Environment and Tourism and on behalf of the Government of Mongolia. He noted the importance of the range of issues to be discussed during the session in the context of green recovery. He highlighted the significance of climate change issues to Mongolia, particularly noting the country’s vulnerability to desertification and the role that forests can play in adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Mr Byambasuren outlined key forestry elements in Mongolia’s green recovery response, including a One Billion Trees programme designed to increase forest area, reduce poverty and contribute to development of new forest products value chains. He encouraged delegates to contribute actively to the deliberations of the Session and noted opportunities for further dialogue at the XV World Forestry Congress and beyond.

6. Ms Tiina Vahanen, Deputy Director, FAO Forestry Division emphasized the importance of forests and forestry in green recovery. She told participants that the past year had been an important one for global forestry, with renewed momentum created by the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on

Forests and Land Use and rapid advancement in the preparations for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. She emphasized that the Commission has a crucial role in shaping directions for forestry and guiding and upscaling future action on the ground and FAO's Forestry Division stands ready to support efforts in this regard.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 1)

7. Under the guidance of Mr Sapol Boonsermsuk (Thailand), outgoing Rapporteur and Acting Chair of the Commission, the provisional agenda was adopted as presented in document FO: APFC/2022/1 (see Appendix A). Documents considered by the Commission are listed in Appendix C.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Item 2)

8. The Commission unanimously elected the following individuals to hold office until the commencement of the Thirtieth Session:

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------|--|
| (i) | Chairperson: | Mr Oyunsanaa Byambasuren (Mongolia) |
| (ii) | Vice-Chairpersons: | Ms Sanjana Lal (Fiji)
Mr Rohit Tiwari (India)
Mr Marcial Amaro Jr. (Philippines) |
| (iii) | Rapporteur: | Mr Keiran Andrusko (Australia) |

Ms Sheila Wertz-Kanounnikoff, Senior Forestry Officer, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific served as Secretary of the Commission.

APFC SESSION THEME: "FORESTS AND GREEN RECOVERY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC" (Item 3)

9. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/2 and a presentation by the delegation of Mongolia, the Commission considered opportunities for forests and forestry to contribute to green recovery by restoring and creating jobs, supporting economic growth and helping the global economy transition toward a more equitable, resilient, sustainable and carbon-neutral future.

10. The Commission:

- a. emphasized the importance of maintaining forest ecosystem services to support livelihoods of local communities during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b. emphasized the potential of nature-based solutions in addressing disruptions to livelihoods and supporting policies to conserve, restore, and sustainably manage forests as a part of resilient and sustainable green recovery plans;
- c. encouraged FAO to continue to promote an ethos of enabling environments and delivery of capacity building to ensure that no-one is left behind;
- d. invited its Members to:
 - (i) promote greater solidarity in collectively addressing global challenges through forestry;

- (ii) strengthen forest governance and technology-based solutions to contain the negative impacts of the pandemic and enhance contributions of the forest sector to the COVID-19 recovery phase;
- (iii) consider provision of financial incentives to the forest sector to allow a shift from an emergency phase to a COVID-19 recovery phase;
- (iv) create enabling conditions for the forest sector to access international assistance and financing in support of specific COVID-19 recovery measures;
- (v) promote the domestic production, sourcing and processing of legal and sustainable timber in support of a more circular economy and to improve or maintain access to increasingly demanding, but also rewarding international markets;
- (vi) emphasize the importance of strengthening supply chains and systems of trade against future disruptions to ensure forest products are not substituted by less sustainable products;
- (vii) collect and improve data on the number of jobs and the level of economic activity generated by the forest sector, to better inform the elements of the COVID-19 recovery response;
- (viii) reflect on other priority actions enabling the forest sector to play a more prominent role in national COVID-19 recovery actions.

e. recommended that FAO:

- (i) support capacity building and provide technical assistance to underpin national efforts to enhance, redesign and implement policies and actions to upscale forest and landscape restoration (including agroforestry) and reduce deforestation and forest degradation, including in the context of green recovery actions;
- (ii) support legal and sustainable forestry value chains with appropriate involvement of local communities, small-scale operators as well as women and youth, using innovative forest technologies and digital tools for improved transparency, monitoring and decision making;
- (iii) strengthen the capacity of governments and relevant stakeholders as regards the sustainable management and use of forest biodiversity (including wildlife) and zoonotic disease prevention through the One Health approach.

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING APFC- AND FAO-SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION (Item 4)

11. Based on Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/3, the Commission reviewed progress in implementing APFC- and FAO-supported activities in the region.

12. The Commission:

- a. appreciated a range of project activities being implemented by FAO, including specifically several being managed for the Global Environment Facility;
- b. encouraged FAO to continue its work on forest governance, including giving attention to capacity building on compliance with legality assurance systems in the forest sector with particular focus

on group certification for small and medium enterprises and linking community producers with timber processing enterprises;

- c. recognized the important roles of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including minimizing natural disaster risks through effective watershed management;
- d. highlighted the importance of collaboration with other international organizations to ensure efficient allocation of resources, timely progress of activities and utilization of appropriate expertise;
- e. emphasized the importance of robust national forest monitoring systems to ensure forest planning and decision-making are effectively supported.

MAINSTREAMING FORESTRY INTO FAO'S WORK ON AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS (Item 5)

13. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/4, the Commission considered linkages between forests and landscapes and the need to transform agri-food systems to pursue synergies and manage trade-offs between agriculture and forestry.

14. The Commission:

- a. appreciated the wealth of actions already being implemented in the region to integrate the role of forests and forestry in efforts to make agri-food systems more sustainable and resilient;
- b. recognized the importance of addressing deforestation through supply chain approaches, with due attention to circumstances in producer countries;
- c. invited its Members to:
 - (i) strengthen actions on halting deforestation, enhancing forest and landscape restoration, while enhancing food security, within work on making agri-food systems more sustainable and resilient;
 - (ii) recognize the synergies between sustainably managed forests and landscapes and climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits to support sustainable and productive agri-food systems;
 - (iii) strengthen the institutional mechanisms for agroforestry and community forestry approaches to maximise synergies between food and fibre provision, carbon storage, wildfire prevention, restoration capacity, biodiversity conservation, soil fertility and water management;
 - (iv) promote efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems that contribute to sustainable forest and landscape management, including through agroforestry, integrated forest and land use approaches, capacity building programmes and improved access to technologies and markets, especially for women and youth;
 - (v) send a message to its Regional Conference emphasizing the need to consider food security, agriculture, forestry and other aspects for rural development in an integrated manner.

- d. recommended that FAO:
- (i) further strengthen cross-sectoral work through activities aimed at halting deforestation and land degradation, and promoting sustainable agriculture and forest management in ways that lead to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems;
 - (ii) continue to provide support to capacity building, technology transfer and mobilization of resources, to ensure continuing food security and rural development and ongoing development of the role REDD+ plays in this.

GLOBAL FOREST RESOURCES ASSESSMENT 2020: STATE OF FORESTRY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (Item 6)

15. Based on Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/5, the Commission considered recent developments in relation to the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) and the state of forestry in the Asia-Pacific region.

16. The Commission:

- a. appreciated recent initiatives in relation to the FRA including efforts in capacity building, to streamline reporting processes, reduce reporting burden and to develop more accessible, user-friendly multi-lingual platforms for outputs;
- b. invited its Members to:
 - (i) continue their active participation in the FRA process through in-kind contributions to the work on improved reporting on primary forests and other forest characteristics;
 - (ii) collaborate with FAO, partner institutions and other countries, to further improve the FRA process and its data collection, analysis and dissemination processes;
- c. recommended that FAO:
 - (i) continue improving the FRA platform to support easy and transparent reporting on forest resources, their management and uses;
 - (ii) continue the work on improved reporting on primary forests and report the first results of the work in the 26th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO);
 - (iii) complete the FRA Remote Sensing Survey and continue capacity development on remote sensing and data management, as well as facilitate related technology transfer.

LINKING THE WORK OF FAO FOREST-RELATED STATUTORY BODIES WITH RELEVANT POLICY AREAS, AND FACILITATING POLICY DIALOGUES AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGES (Item 7)

17. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/6 and a presentation on a specific review of its own governance structures and modalities, the Commission considered ways to better facilitate its policy dialogues and technical exchanges to assist in achieving Members' goals and contributions to international processes and goals and explored options for more strongly linking its work to the work of FAO's Forestry Division and other policy areas with relevance for forestry, in order to increase its relevance and efficiency, create synergies and enhance participation.

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18. The Commission:
- a. observed that the COVID-19 pandemic requires inclusive and transparent policy dialogues that move beyond business-as-usual, encompass credible and science-based approaches, while also recognizing common, but differentiated, responsibilities and balancing targets with means of implementation;
 - b. recognized that virtual meetings can provide an efficient means to reduce burdens on member countries;
 - c. invited its Members to:
 - (i) continue reflecting on ways in which its policy dialogues and technical exchanges can be focused to better assist in achieving its Members' goals and their contributions to international processes and goals;
 - (ii) consider, with reference to the questions contained in Annex 1 of Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/6, ways to further enhance the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Regional Forestry Commissions and other FAO forestry-related Statutory Bodies as well as ways to increase participation in meetings of the Statutory Bodies, in the context of the ongoing APFC governance review;
 - (iii) note the emerging findings outlined in the scoping document of the APFC governance review;
 - (iv) actively contribute to the next steps of the APFC governance review to ensure the reform meets the needs of APFC members.
 - d. recommended that FAO:
 - (i) circulate the draft scoping report of the APFC governance review for comments;
 - (ii) convene an informal consultation with nominated representatives from APFC Members and other stakeholders to further discuss and refine proposed options, including budgetary implications, to reform the APFC governance structure to provide greater relevance, efficiency and effectiveness;
 - (iii) report on progress made in the APFC governance review at its next session as well as to the next session of COFO
 - e. identified a number of priority topics for the attention of the 26th Session of the FAO Committee on Forestry. These included:
 - (i) forest pests and diseases;
 - (ii) green recovery and the role of sustainable forest management and sustainable production in meeting growing demands;
 - (iii) international collaboration and synergy among global initiatives;
 - (iv) enhancing sustainability for the forest sector taking into account differing national contexts and priorities;
 - (v) aligning public and private stakeholder perspectives within a practical and actionable framework for sustainable forest management;

- (vi) promoting trade and development policies that contribute to sustainable development;
- (vii) evidence-based policy and appropriate tools to support decision making in sustainable forest management;
- (viii) promoting the science-policy interface for agri-food systems and sustainable forest management;
- (ix) sustainable production and consumption of forest products;
- (x) sustainable financing, including for REDD+ and Payments for Ecosystem Services modalities;
- (xi) promoting value chains for forest products in the context of COVID-19 impacts and recovery;
- (xii) leveraging technology for sustainable forest management;
- (xiii) innovative technologies to support wood-based industries;
- (xiv) deforestation.

UPDATE ON GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND PROCESSES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE REGIONAL FORESTRY COMMISSIONS (Item 8)

19. On the basis of Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/7, a presentation on preparations for the XV World Forestry Congress and a statement by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), the Commission considered major developments within global policy initiatives and processes with strong relevance to forestry.

20. The Commission:

- a. invited its members to:
 - (i) consider forest-relevant updates on international events and processes as contained in Secretariat Note FO: APFC/2022/7 to facilitate policy dialogues and technical exchanges, and to assist in achieving Members' goals and contributions to international processes and goals;
 - (ii) welcome the topical focus of FAO's flagship publication "The State of the World's Forests" 2022, titled "Forestry and Green Recovery, Building Inclusive and Sustainable Green Economies";
 - (iii) welcome FAO's efforts in mainstreaming forest-related issues into the UN Food Systems Summit and its follow up process;
 - (iv) welcome the developments under the UN Secretary-General's Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation
 - (v) welcome the themes of the International Day of Forests 2022 and 2023 and consider them in the preparations of celebration events in the region.

- b. in regard to the XV World Forestry Congress, the Commission welcomed the report and invited its members to:
- (i) recommend ways and means to best collaborate with relevant global processes and instruments and to create synergies including in implementing the World Forestry Congress outcomes;
 - (ii) support the XV World Forestry Congress by encouraging and facilitating good attendance, and encourage countries in a position to do so to provide financial support to the Congress to enable balanced participation.
- c. recommended that FAO:
- (i) promote SOFO 2022 within and outside of the forestry sector;
 - (ii) take an active part in advancing the UN Secretary-General's Initiative on Turning the Tide on Deforestation and related activities;
 - (iii) continue to take an active role as the Chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and through this enhance advocacy on forests through relevant global processes and initiatives.

OTHER BUSINESS (Item 9)

21. The Commission was informed of activities implemented by three of its working groups and by several other organizations and initiatives, including:

- TeakNet;
- Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network (APFISN);
- Asia-Pacific Forest Communication Network (APFCN);
- Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-Based Industries (ACSF);
- Bio, Circular and Green Economy (BCG) model as theme of Thailand's APEC 2022 Presidency;
- Asia-Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN);
- Update on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;
- Update on GEF7 Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Programme (FOLUR).

22. The Commission:

- a. noted that several of its networks had remained active throughout the COVID-19 pandemic;
- b. was informed that the BCG model provides an exemplar for production of renewable biological resources, re-using and recycling resources, and can help to balance environmental, social and economic goals as a basis for sustainable development;
- c. appreciated the significance of policy frameworks that enable the monetization of a wide range of forestry goods and ecosystem services as a means of attracting large-scale investment in sustainably managed forests;
- d. acknowledged the importance of reliable data to support appropriate policy and investment decisions and catalyze transformative action;

- e. invited members to identify significant ecosystem restoration efforts for nomination as Flagship Initiatives within the scope of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Item 10)

23. The Commission noted with appreciation the offer of the delegation from Australia to host its thirtieth session.

AGENDA

“Forests and green recovery in Asia and the Pacific”

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Election of officers
3. APFC session theme: “Forests and green recovery in Asia and the Pacific”
4. Progress in implementing APFC- and FAO-supported activities in the region
5. Mainstreaming forestry into FAO’s work on agri-food systems
6. Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: State of forestry in Asia and the Pacific
7. Linking the work of FAO forest-related statutory bodies with relevant policy areas, and facilitating policy dialogues and technical exchanges
8. Update on global initiatives and processes of relevance for the Regional Forestry Commissions
9. Other business
10. Date and place of the next session
11. Adoption of the report

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairperson:	Oyunsanaa Byambasuren (Mongolia)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Sanjana Lal (Fiji) Rohit Tiwari (India) Marcial Amaro Jr. (Philippines)
Rapporteur:	Keiran Andrusko (Australia)
Secretary:	Sheila Wertz-Kanounnikoff (FAO)

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**Australia**

Keiran Andrusko
A/g Director, Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Water and the
Environment
18 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra ACT 2601

Katie Stokes
Assistant Director, International Forest Policy
Department of Agriculture, Water and the
Environment

Claire Howell
Principal Scientist, Forestry
Australian Bureau of Agricultural and
Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES)

Bangladesh

Md. Zaglul Hossain
Deputy Chief Conservator of Forests
Planning Wing, Forest Department

Mohammad Abdul Awal Sarker
Conservator of Forests
Jessore Circle, Jessore

Md. Zaheer Iqbal
Conservator of Forests, RIMS Unit
Banabhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka

Abdullah Al Mamun
Divisional Forest Officer, Coastal Forest
Division
Patuakhali

Bhutan

Sonam Tobgay
Chief Forestry Officer
Forest Resources Management Division
Department of Forests and Park Services
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu

Cambodia

Dany Chheang
Deputy Director General
Forestry Administration
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
#40, Preah Norodom Blvd. Phnom Penh

Vanna Samreth
Deputy Director
Department of Forest and Community Forestry
Forestry Administration
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Sok Srun
Head of Office
Administration and International Cooperation
Forestry Administration
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

China

Yuanhui Hu
Deputy Director General
Department of International Cooperation
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration
No. 18 Hepingli East Street
Dongcheng District, Beijing

Jing Yang
Deputy Director General
Department of Forest Resources Management
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Yujie Chen
Deputy Division Chief
Chinese Academy of Forestry
Dongxiaofu No.1, Xiangshan Road
Haidian District, Beijing

Junkai Gao
Division Director
Department of Reform and Development for
Forestry and Grassland
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Jing Liao
Deputy Division Director
Department of International Cooperation
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Qi Mao
International Cooperation Center
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Tong Shen
Chinese Academy of Forestry
Dongxiaofu No.1, Xiangshan Road
Haidian District, Beijing

Xiaobin Tang
Associate Professor
National Forestry-Grassland Development
Research Center
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Qian Zhang
Deputy Director of monitoring research Office
National Forestry-Grassland Development
Research Center
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Yang Hui
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Sixian Zheng
Deputy Division Director
Department of International Cooperation
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Danyang Zhang
Program Officer
Department of Forest Resources Management
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Kun Zhang
Professor
National Forestry-Grassland Development
Research Center
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Guangshuai Zhao
Senior Engineer
National Forestry-Grassland Development
Research Center
National Forestry and Grassland
Administration

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Kim Chon Gil
Deputy Permanent Representative for the UN
Agencies in Rome
DPR Korea Embassy in Rome
Viale dell Esperanto 26, Rome, Italy

Jon Kyong Dok
Alternate Representative for the UN Agencies
in Rome
DPR Korea Embassy in Rome

Fiji

Sanjana Lal
 Conservator of Forests
 Ministry of Forestry, PO Box 2218
 Government Buildings, Suva

Olivia Vakaloloma
 Principal Economic Planning Officer
 Ministry of Forestry, Takayawa Blds, Toorak
 Suva

Deborah Sue
 Timber Utilization Research and Training
 Ministry of Forestry, Takayawa Blds , Toorak
 Suva

India

Rohit Tiwari
 Inspector General of Forests (Forest Policy)
 Government of India
 Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate
 Change
 Indira Paryavaran Bhawan
 Jor Bagh Road New
 Delhi-110003

Suneet Bhardwaj
 Assistant Inspector General of Forests (Forest
 Conservation)
 Government of India
 Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate
 Change

Jitesh Kumar
 Technical Officer Forestry (Forest Policy)
 Government of India
 Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate
 Change

Indonesia

Agus Justianto
 Director General of Sustainable Forest
 Management
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry of
 the Republic of Indonesia
 Manggala Wanabakti Buildings, Block I
 11th Floor, Jl. Jenderal Gatot Subroto, Jakarta
 10270

Dida Migfar Ridha
 Director of International Cooperation Bureau
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Rahmat Budiono
 Head of Sub Directorate of FMU Development
 DG of Sustainable Forest Management
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Dodi Sumardi
 Deputy Director of International Cooperation
 Facilitation
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Sigit Pramono
 Senior Policy Analyst
 DG of Sustainable Forest Management
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Sya'roni Agung Wibisono
 Policy Analyst
 International Cooperation Bureau
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Yoga Hadiprasetya
 Technical Cooperation Analyst
 DG of Sustainable Forest Management
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Fitri Novitasari
 Coordinator of Technical Cooperation
 Working Group
 DG Social Forestry and Environmental
 Partnership
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Vinda Fellisia
 Staff of Programme
 Evaluation, Law, and Technical Cooperation
 Division
 DG Social Forestry and Environmental
 Partnership
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Jefri Gibson Nababan
 Staff of Programme
 Evaluation, Law, and Technical Cooperation
 Division
 DG Social Forestry and Environmental
 Partnership
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Budi Wirawan
 Associate Planner at DG of Climate Change
 Control
 Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Dedy Lukmansjah
Statistician at Data and Information Center
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Gatot Setiawan
Policy Analyst at DG of Climate Change
Control
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Phury Agathis
Staff at Data & Information Center
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Retno Suratni
Data analyst at Legal and Technical
Cooperation Division
DG of Conservation of Natural Resources and
Ecosystem
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Herti Winastuti Reinisia
Statistician at Data & Information Center
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Ary Sudijanto
DG of Standardization of Environmental
Forestry Instrument
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Mahfudz
Director of Data and Information Center
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Firman Maulana
Deputy Director of Data and Information
Management
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Riva Rovani
Forest Resource Information Analyst
DG of Forestry Planning and Environmental
Governance
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Dinik Indrihastuti
Policy Analyst at DG of Climate Change
Control
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Aditya Perdana Putra
Policy Analyst at DG of Climate Change
Control
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

Fathia Maryam Perdata
Foreign Service Officer at Directorate of
Trade, Industry, Commodity and Intellectual
Property
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Caka Alverdi Awal
Minister Counsellor
Alt. Permanent Representative of Indonesia to
FAO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Purna Cita Nugraha
First Secretary, Embassy of Indonesia in Rome
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Nona Gae Luna
First Secretary, Embassy of Indonesia in Rome
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ida Ayu Ratih
Agriculture Attache
Alt. Permanent Representative of Indonesia to
FAO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Aris Ristiyana
Staff, Center for Standardization and
Instrument of Disaster and Climate Change
MoEF

Diahwati Agustayani
Junior Policy Analyst, Center of Facilitation
Implementation Standard Instrument
Environment and Forestry, MoEF

Duhita Lusiyana
Technical Cooperation Analyst
Secretariat of the Agency for Standardization
of Environmental and Forestry Instruments
(ASEFI), MoEF

Dyah Puspasari
Social Media Content Analyst (Head of
Working Group of Cooperation), Secretariat of
the Agency for Standardization of
Environmental and Forestry Instruments
(ASEFI), MoEF

Mirna Aulia Pribadi
Researcher, Center for Standardization and
Instrument of Disaster and Climate Change
MoEF

Randi Ramadhansjah
Data Analyst, Center of Facilitation
Implementation Standard Instrument
Environment and Forestry, MoEF

Rudi Subarudi
Researcher, Center for Standardization and
Instrument of Disaster and Climate Change
MoEF

Japan

Takashi Yamazaki
Director, International Forestry Cooperation
Office, Forestry Agency
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8950

Naoki Hayasaka
Deputy Director, International Forestry
Cooperation Office, Forestry Agency
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Hideki Kawai
Assistant Director, International Forestry
Cooperation Office, Forestry Agency
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Yutaka Machida
Section Chief, International Forestry
Cooperation Office, Forestry Agency
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Malaysia

Mohd Izani bin Abdullah
Head of Section (Water Catchment Forest
Conservation)
Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia

Iqtie Qamar Laila binti Mohd Gani
Senior Assistant Director (International
Affairs)
Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia

Jennifer Francis,
Assistant Director (International Affairs)
Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia

Mongolia

Oyunsanaa Byambasuren
Director General of the Forest Policy and
Coordination Department
Ministry of Environment and Tourism of
Mongolia

Ariuntuya Dorjsuren
Senior Expert at the International Cooperation
Department
Ministry of Environment and Tourism of
Mongolia

Ganbayar Ganbold
Alternate Permanent Representative of
Mongolia to the UN FAO
via Vincenzo Bellini, 4, Rome, Italy

Nepal

Gyanendra Kumar Mishra
Under Secretary
Ministry of Forests and Environment
Kathmandu

Pakistan

Raja Muhammad Omer
Deputy Inspector General (Forest)
Government of Pakistan
Ministry of Climate Change
Islamabad

Papua New Guinea

Dambis Kaip
Director – Resource Planning and
Development, PNG Forest Authority
P O Box 5055, Boroko
National Capital District
Frangipani Street Hohola

Gewa Gamoga
Manager, Land-use Monitoring
PNG Forest Authority

Alois Jenkihau
Manager – Policy and Aid Coordination
PNG Forest Authority

Susan Kulukulu
Manager – Trade governance
PNG Forest Authority

Philippines

Marcial Jr. Amaro
 Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and
 Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects
 Forest Management Bureau (FMB)
 Director, Forest Management Bureau, and
 ASOF Leader
 Department of Environment and Natural
 Resources, Visayas Avenue Diliman

Republic of Korea

Eunsik Park
 Director General
 Korea Forest Service
 189, Cheongsa-ro, Seo-gu, Daejeon

Jina Kim
 Director
 Korea Forest Service

Wonyeong Song
 Deputy Director
 Korea Forest Service

Ji Hye Moon
 Deputy Director
 Korea Forest Service

Jongsu Lee
 Deputy Director
 Korea Forest Service

Kyungmi Oh
 Programme Officer
 Korea Forest Service

Jina Yang
 Programme Officer
 Korea Forest Service

Hyungsoon Choi
 Director of global forestry division
 National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS)
 57 Hoegi-ro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul

Eunho Choi
 Research Official
 National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS)

A-Ram Yang
 Research Official
 National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS)

Russian Federation

Denis Izotov
 Academic Secretary
 Far Eastern Forestry Research Institute
 71, Volochaevskaya
 Khabarovsk

Samoa

Moafanua Tolusina Pouli
 Assistant Chief Executive Officer - Forestry
 Ministry of Natural Resources and
 Environment
 L3 TATTE Building, Sogi, Apia

Solomon Islands

Vaeno Vigulu
 Permanent Secretary
 Ministry of Forestry and Research, Honiara

Thailand

Sapol Boonsermsuk
 Director of International Forestry Foreign
 Affairs Office
 Royal Forest Department
 Ministry of Natural Resources and
 Environment (MoNRE)
 61 Phaholyothin Road, Bangkok

Preecha Ongprasert
 Forestry Technical Officer Professional Level
 Royal Forest Department

Prattana Meesincharoen
 Policy and Plan Analyst
 Royal Forest Department

Montri Intasen
 Forestry Technical Officer Professional Level
 Royal Forest Department

Kraiwut Siri-on
 Forestry Technical Officer Professional Level
 Forest Survey and Assessment Division
 Forest Land Management Office
 Royal Forest Department

Woraphun Himmaman
 Forestry Technical Officer
 Forest Research and Development Bureau
 Royal Forest Department

Suwan Tangmitcharoen
Forest Restoration Extension Specialist
Royal Forest Department

Vivat Songprasert
Director of Technology Transfer and
Development
Agricultural Land Reform Office
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
166 Pradipat Road, Samsennai, Payathai
Bangkok 10400

Prae-Ravee K-Hasuwan
Director of International Cooperation Sub-
bureau, Agricultural Land Reform Office
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
1 Ratchadamnoen Nok Road
Ban Phantom, Phra Nakhon, Bangkok

Darin Pejajaran
Foreign Relation Officer
Agricultural Land Reform Office
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

I-sawan Arayataweegool
Land Reform Technical Officer
Agricultural Land Reform Office
Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Vanuatu

Godfrey Bome
Forest Manager -Operation
Department of Forests, PMB 9064, Port Vila

Willie Lore
Senior Forest Officer-Planning
Department of Forests

Viet Nam

Tran Hieu Minh
Deputy Director
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry

Luu Tien Dat
Senior Official
Viet Nam Administration of Forestry

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

Barbara Tavora Jainchill
Forest Affairs Officer
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
U.N. Forum on Forests Secretariat
2 UN Plaza, NY 10017, USA

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Jamal Annagylyjova
Forest biodiversity and restoration officer
413 Rue Saint-Jacques suite 620, Montreal
Quebec H2Y 1N9, Canada

OBSERVERS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI)

Pin Kar Yong
Executive Secretary
Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research
Institutions
c/o Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)
52109 Kepong, Selangor, Malaysia

Manoj Kumar Dubey
Executive Committee Member
APAFRI Secretariat

Gan Kee Seng
Secretariat Fellow

Syuqiyah Abdul Hamid
APAFRI Secretariat

Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)

Mei Yuan
Acting Director, Capacity Building Division
Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)
6th Floor, Baoneng Center (Building A)
12 Futong Dongdajie, Chaoyang district
Beijing, China. Post code:100102

Chuyu Hu
Program Officer, Capacity Building Division
Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet)

Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO)

Ricardo Calderon
Executive Director
Asian Forest Cooperation Organization
8F, Gukhoedaero-62-gil 9, Yeongdeungpo-gu
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Jimyung Kim
Officer-in-Charge, Planning and Budget
Division
Asian Forest Cooperation Organization

Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN)

Yongqi Zheng
Chair, APFORGEN
Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources
Program

Rekha R Warriar
Scientist, Plant Biotechnology & Cytogenetics
Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding
(ICFRE-IFGTB), Tamil Nadu, India

ASEAN Secretariat

Dian Sukmajaya
Senior Officer Forestry
Food Agriculture and Forestry Division
ASEAN Secretariat
Jakarta, Indonesia

Bioversity International

Riina Jalonen
Scientist & Head, Malaysia Office
Bioversity International, Malaysia

Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF)

Delia C Catacutan
Principal Scientist
Acting Country Representative – Philippines
World Agroforestry (ICRAF)
2/F Khush Hall, International Rice Research
Institute (IRRI), Los Banos, Laguna
Philippines

Green Climate Fund (GCF)

Petteri Vuorinen
Senior Forest and Land Use Specialist
Division of Mitigation and Adaptation (DMA)
Songdo, Incheon City, Republic of Korea

International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR)

Jayaraman Durai
Director of Global Programs
International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation
(INBAR)
8, Futong Dong Da Jie, Wangjing, Chaoyang
District, P. R. China

Borja De La Peña Escardo
Global Policy Officer
International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation
(INBAR)

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)

Sheamala Satkuru
Executive Director
International Tropical Timber Organization
International Organization Center, 5th Floor
Pacifico-Yokohama, 1-1-1 Minato-Mirai
Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-0012, Japan

Hwan-ok Ma
Projects Manager
Forest Management Division
International Tropical Timber Organization

Tetra Yanuariadi
Projects Manager, Trade and Industry
International Tropical Timber Organization

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Scott Perkin
Head, Science and Strategy Group
IUCN Asia Regional Office
63 Sukhumvit Soi 39, Bangkok 10110
Thailand

Bo Sann
Senior Technical Officer
Monitoring & Evaluation and Knowledge
Management Specialist

Pacific Community (SPC)

Jalesi Mateboto
Natural Resources Management Advisor
Pacific Community (SPC)
3 Luke Street, Nabua
Suva, Fiji

RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests

David Ganz
Executive Director
Regional Community Forestry Training Center
for Asia and the Pacific
P.O. Box 1111, Kasetsart Post Office
Bangkok 10903, Thailand

RESOURCE PERSONS

Achim Engelhardt
FAO Consultant – APFC Governance Review
Founding director, monitoring and evaluation
specialist
Lotus M&E Group, Geneva, Switzerland

Detty Saluling
Asia-Pacific Forest Communicators Network
(APFCN)
Manager, Rainforest Journalism Fund
Bangkok, Thailand

Ross Hampton
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Forest Products Association
Advisory Committee on Sustainable Forest-
based Industries (ACSF)

S. Sandeep
TEAKNET Coordinator
Senior Scientist, Department of Soil Science
Kerala Forest Research Institute
Peechi- 680 653, Kerala, India

Simon Lawson
Associate Professor in Forest Health
Forest Research Institute
Forest Industries Research Centre
University of the Sunshine Coast
Co-Coordinator Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive
Species Network

OTHER OBSERVERS

Alfred Tony
 Allocations Officer – Southern/Highlands
 Regions
 PNG Forest Authority
 P.O. Box 5055, Boroko
 National Capital District, Papua New Guinea

Jacqueline Caancan
 Regional Executive Director
 Department of Environment and Natural
 Resources-National Capital Region
 Philippines

Patrick Durst
 Forestry Expert
 Bangkok, Thailand

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)

Ewald Rametsteiner
 Deputy Director, Forestry Division (NFO)
 FAO Headquarters

Dominique Rozas
 Liaison and Meetings Officer
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Tiina Vahanen
 Deputy Director, Forestry Division (NFO)
 FAO Headquarters

Anssi Pekkarinen
 Senior Forestry Officer and Team Leader
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Peter Csoka
 Associate Secretary-General
 XV World Forestry Congress Secretariat
 FAO Headquarters

Shiroma Sathyapala
 Forest Health Officer
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Malgorzata Buszko-Briggs
 Senior Forestry Officer and COFO Secretary
 Forestry Division (NFO)
 FAO Headquarters

Sara Maulo
 Outreach, Knowledge Management and
 Networking Specialist
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Thomas Hofer
 Senior Forestry Officer and Team Leader
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Chiara Patriarca
 Forest Resource Data Analyst
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Sven Walter
 Senior Forestry Officer and Team Leader
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Arianna Evans
 Statutory bodies and global events consultant
 FAO Headquarters

Lyndall Bull
 Forestry Officer
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Francesca Bertola
 Technical support, communication and
 logistics to the Advisory Committee on
 Sustainable Forest Based, NFO
 FAO Headquarters

Anne Branthomme
 Forestry Officer, Global Forest Resources
 Assessment
 Forestry Division (NFO), FAO Headquarters

Sheila Wertz-Kanounnikoff
Senior Forestry Officer and Module Leader
Forestry and Biodiversity
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Rao Matta
Forestry Officer
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Illias Animon
Forestry Officer
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Bruno Cammaert
Forestry Officer, FAO-EU FLEGT Programme
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Marco Piazza
Forestry Officer
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Mathieu van Rijn
Forestry Officer, UNREDD Programme
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Chris Brown
Forestry Expert
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Josil Murray
Consultant, FAO-EU FLEGT Programme
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Devin Sethi
Junior Officer - PSA
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Jhongsathit Aungvitayatorn
National Project Coordinator
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Chisa Padungpornworakul
Programme Assistant, FLEGT and
REDD+/NFM
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Anna Ioannou
Associate Professional Officer - Forest and
Landscape Restoration
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Adam Gerrand
Chief Technical Advisor
Indonesia

Alf. Simarangkir
Programme Officer
Indonesia

Akiko Inoguchi
Forestry Officer
Lao People's Democratic Republic

Vinod Ahuja
FAO Representative in Mongolia
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Anudari Enkhtur
Programme Associate, FAO Mongolia
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Lex Thomson
Senior Forestry Consultant
Australia

Zin Myo Thu
National Programme Specialist
Myanmar

Ricardo Javier Dominguez Llosa
Technical Advisor
Vanuatu

Kallaya Meechantra
Office Associate
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Code	Title
FO: APFC/2022/1	Provisional Agenda
FO: APFC/2022/2	APFC session theme: “Forests and green recovery in Asia and the Pacific”
FO: APFC/2022/3	Progress in implementing APFC- and FAO-supported activities in the region
FO: APFC/2022/4	Mainstreaming forestry into FAO’s work on agri-food systems
FO: APFC/2022/5	Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020: State of forestry in Asia and the Pacific
FO: APFC/2022/6	Linking the work of FAO forest-related statutory bodies with relevant policy areas, and facilitating policy dialogues and technical exchanges
FO: APFC/2022/7	Update on global initiatives and processes of relevance for the Regional Forestry Commissions
FO: APFC/2022/INF.1	Information Note
FO: APFC/2022/INF.2	Provisional Timetable
FO: APFC/2022/INF.3	List of Documents

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Australia	Nepal
Bangladesh	New Zealand
Bhutan	Pakistan
Cambodia	Papua New Guinea
China	Philippines
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Republic of Korea
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France	Samoa
India	Solomon Islands
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Japan	Thailand
Kiribati	Timor-Leste
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Tonga
Malaysia	Tuvalu
Maldives	United States of America
Mongolia	Vanuatu
Myanmar	Viet Nam

Forestry and Biodiversity Module
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
FAO-RAP@fao.org
<http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/en/>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Bangkok, Thailand