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LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION****Asuncion, Paraguay, 5 – 9 March, 2012****PROGRESS IN PREPARATION OF THE STATE OF THE WORLD
FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES****Secretariat Note****INTRODUCTION**

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), at its Twelfth Regular Session (2009), requested FAO to prepare *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources (SOW-FGR)*, for consideration at its Fourteenth Regular Session (2013), as the first authoritative assessment of forest genetic resources of importance to sustainable forest management, food security, poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability. An Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (ITWG-FGR) was established to guide the implementation of the forest genetic resources component of the program of work of CGRFA, including the preparation of the SOW-FGR report.
2. All FAO Regional Forestry Commissions, meeting in 2010, were informed of the preparation of the *Report*. At its 26th Session, the LACFC highlighted the importance of the study on the state of the world's forest genetic resources and agreed that such a study would require strong commitment and support from the countries.
3. At its Twentieth session in October 2010, COFO welcomed the initiative to develop the SOW-FGR and recommended that FAO continue this important effort. COFO further requested FAO to strengthen its capacity to respond to the international reporting and information sharing needs related to the conservation of forest biological diversity, including through FRA, National Forest Monitoring and Assessment and the SOW-FGR and encouraged countries to provide additional resources within their means to support these initiatives.
4. The Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, at its tenth session in October 2010, recognized the importance of forest genetic diversity for the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity, including in the context of addressing climate change and maintaining the resilience of forest ecosystems. In this context, it welcomed the preparation by

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FAO of the SOW-FGR and invited Parties, other Governments, and relevant organizations to support its preparation.

5. The ITWG-FGR held its first session in April 2011. The CGRFA, at its last session in July 2011, endorsed the Report of the First Session of the ITWG-FGR¹, welcomed progress made in the preparation of the SOW-FGR, moved the date for submission of country reports to 1 January 2012, and urged donors and relevant international organizations to make available extra-budgetary financial resources and in-kind support for the preparation of Country Reports, including for national and regional consultations. The CGRFA elected new members of the ITWG-FGR for the period 2011-2013. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and El Salvador are representing Region in the ITWG.

6. This document presents activities undertaken in preparation of the *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, and draws attention on actions needed for achieving the SOW-FGR by 2013.

PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATION OF *THE STATE OF THE WORLD FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES*

Preparation of country reports on forest genetic resources

7. Through Circular State Letter (FO-19) dated 27 April 2010, the Director-General of FAO requested FAO Members to submit Country Reports for the SOW-FGR and to nominate National Focal Points for the preparation of Country Reports.

8. FAO reviewed and finalized the *Guidelines for the preparation of country reports for The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* (Guidelines). In finalizing the Guidelines FAO made use of comments received during various expert workshops, including regional workshops, and from national experts. The Guidelines constitute the main reference document for the country reporting process. They aim to

- Assist countries to undertake a strategic assessment of their forest genetic resources in the framework of their national forest programs.
- Provide a common framework for countries to report globally on the state of their forest genetic resources, on conservation, development and sustainable use activities, needs and priorities.
- Identify gaps and needs in national, regional and global policy-making and thus to enable policy makers to take action, as appropriate.

The Guidelines were made available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/64585/en/>

9. FAO organized regional workshops, to inform and train national focal points and experts in the preparation of Country Report for the SOW-FGR following the Guidelines:

- For Latin America, in November 2010, at Cali (Colombia) in collaboration with Bioversity International

¹ CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/Report (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/67904/en/>)

- For South West Pacific, in January 2011 at Nadi (Fiji) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- For Asia, in March 2011, at Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) and Bioversity International
- For Sub-saharan Africa, in April 2011, at Nairobi (Kenya) in collaboration with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), Bioversity International and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- For the Near East and North Africa, in June 2011 at Hammamet (Tunisia) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Tunisia and World Wildlife Fund for Nature;
- For Central Asia and East Europe in September 2011 at Izmit (Turkey) in collaboration with the General Directorate of Forestry of Turkey.

Reports of the regional workshops are available in FAO forestry website: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/71289/en/>

10. Countries' work plans for the preparation of Country Reports for the SOW-FGR, drafted during the above regional workshops, served as a basis for proposals by countries for technical and financial support from development partners, including FAO. Unfortunately, it was not possible to get extra-budgetary funding to support the preparation of country reports. In a number of cases, FAO could provide technical and financial assistance through the TCP Facility.

11. FAO and the Secretariat of the CBD are coordinating their efforts in supporting countries and regions in gathering information and reporting, and avoid undesirable duplications, through sharing of information and collaboration in regional workshops to support the preparation of Country Reports. The preparation of Country Reports on forest genetic resources should be included into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, as the preparatory process can be considered both as a strategic planning exercise and a tool for the better assessment and sustainable management of an important component of forest biodiversity in the country.

Preparation of thematic background studies

12. While emphasizing the importance of Country Reports for the preparation of the SOW-FGR, the CGRFA considered the possibility of thematic studies, depending on available resources, where sufficient information and knowledge is lacking, and where the issues are treated on a global level. FAO initiated the preparation of thematic studies in collaboration with Bioversity International and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) on the following issues:

- Indicators of forest genetic diversity, erosion and vulnerability;
- Understanding genetic diversity of tropical species in natural forests;
- New technologies and approaches to support conservation of FGR;
- Use and transfer of FGR;
- Role of forest genetic resources in adaptation to biotic and abiotic factors, with a focus
 - on climate change;
- Forest genetic resources in decentralised management for food security, poverty reduction and livelihood improvement;
- Effects of management practices on forest genetic diversity;
- Use of native species in biodiversity restoration and management;
- Trends in management of forest genetic resources by the private and corporate sector.

Strengthening information systems

13. With in-kind support from the Canadian Forest Service, FAO initiated work to upgrade the characteristics and functionalities of the existing global forest genetic resources database (REFORGEN), to store and manage information related to the SOW-FGR, in particular the data provided by Country Reports.

NEXT STEPS AND ISSUES IN PREPARATION OF *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES*

14. The deadline for submission of country reports to FAO was established to 1 January 2012 by the CGRFA. To allow sufficient time for the analysis and synthesis of data of Country Reports for the subsequent preparation of the SOW-FGR, a timely submission of Country Reports is essential. The analysis and synthesis of information provided by Country Reports will be facilitated by the upgraded global forest genetic resources database REFORGEN.

15. Once a sufficient number of Country Reports has been received, regional consultations should take place to identify needs and priorities for action at regional and global level. The objective of these regional consultations would be to identify needs and priorities for action at the regional and global levels.

16. Based on Country Reports received, reports of regional consultations, submissions of international organizations and the completed thematic background studies, FAO will prepare the draft *Report* by the end of 2012. Chapters of the first draft will be reviewed by experts as they are produced. A consolidated draft will be made available for review by the ITWG-FGR, at its Second Session, prior to the presentation of the draft *Report* to the CGRFA at its Fourteenth Regular Session, in 2013.

17. Financial gaps remain in respect of essential activities for the preparation of the SOW-FGR by 2013. Extra-budgetary financial support is needed to support regional analysis and synthesis of information, needs and priorities, including through regional consultations.