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منظمة الأغذية
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Food and
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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
Naciones Unidas
para la
Alimentación y la
Agricultura

CONFERENCE

Thirty-eighth Session

Rome, 15-22 June 2013

Evaluation of the International Year of Forests (2011)

Executive Summary

This document explains FAO's activities related to the International Year of Forests 2011¹ (IYF), including FAO's role, as chair of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), in facilitating international cooperation. FAO's impact was substantial as it provided communication and information materials to countries and hosted or co-hosted events, to facilitate action on the ground and fulfil the objective of the IYF, which was to raise awareness of sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. FAO also worked with country and CPF partners to carry forward FAO member support for a UN-recognized International Day of Forests, which the UN General Assembly approved through Resolution A/67/200. FAO celebrated the first International Day of Forests with country and Headquarters-based events and other promotional materials on 21 March 2013 and will work with partners to formulate future campaigns.

Suggested Action by the Conference:

The Conference is invited to:

- Endorse the evaluation report and recognize the achievements of the International Year in raising public awareness on the contribution of forests to sustainable development; and recognize further the active involvement of Member Nations and the contribution of FAO to supporting and coordinating activities including within the CPF;
- Note with appreciation the proclamation of 21 March as the International Day of Forests and request FAO to facilitate the implementation of the International Day as stipulated in GA Resolution A/67/200.

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¹ Resolution 61/193 of the UN General Assembly

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



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I. Overview

1. The UN General Assembly declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests (IYF) requesting that the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) serve as the international focal point for the implementation of the Year, in collaboration with governments, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and international, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes as well as relevant major groups. The General Assembly invited FAO, as the Chair of the CPF, to support the implementation of the Year.
2. The purpose of the Year was to raise awareness on the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations. 'Forests for People' was the main theme of the Year, highlighting the dynamic relationship between forests and the people who depend on them.
3. At its 37th session the Conference reviewed the progress in the implementation of the Year and gave further guidance to FAO for supporting the implementation of the Year². The current document presents the main achievements of the work arising from that mandate.
4. The Year resulted in many on-the-ground country activities. FAO provided communication materials to countries via its 'IYF Toolkit for Communicators', which provided countries with key messages, graphic design templates and other information to promote forests and forestry. In addition to country-level initiatives, many of which involved tree planting, FAO regional offices took action on the ground during the Year and CPF members created a series of thematic press releases to promote forests worldwide.

II. Financial Overview and Impact

5. The IYF programme was run with a low budget, especially in light of the impact made. Investment officially dedicated to the year was USD250 000, from the FAO regular programme budget. The investment returns are hard to evaluate: for example a USD30 000 IYF spots earned USD3.46 million commercial value of airtime on international news channels, but the forestry message reaching hundreds of millions of viewers is priceless. In addition, qualitative feedback from countries indicated that the information and communication tools FAO produced to promote the year facilitated activities, helpful discussions and exchange of experiences about forests and forestry. The total returns and impact are significant, given the extent of co-sponsored events, publicity, press releases and other concrete work produced during the year. Many of these outputs are listed below.

III. IYF Events and Products

6. The Year was officially launched at the High-Level Segment of the 9th Session of UNFF on 2 February 2011. In support, FAO presented its flagship publication, the *State of the World's Forests* 2011, and the IYF Toolkit for Communicators. Publicity for the State of the World's Forests 2011/IYF launch generated 424 stories in the news, 17 of which were run widely on top tier news outlets with large readerships. A special issue of *Unasylva* was devoted to showcasing, through the different UN-sponsored international days, how forests and trees are inextricably linked with almost every aspect of human life.
7. To support national efforts, FAO developed a communications toolkit as an open source for both national authorities and civil society, which saved money and human resources in the field, as officers were not required to invest resources in producing their own materials. Posters were also reproduced for FAO country-driven events using the regular programme budget.
8. The FAO Forestry Department launched and maintained a dedicated website to provide up-to-date information related to the Year: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/en/>.

² C 2011/Report para. 74-77

9. More innovative approaches were also tested, with funds from the ‘Innovation Fund’ used to create mobile applications containing FAO forestry-related information.
10. FAO regional offices increased the visibility of the Year, including through various publicity activities and events:
- Asia-Pacific Regional Office: stepped up its ‘Kids to Forest’ forestry education programme in new countries; and held the 24th Session of the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission and the First Asia-Pacific Forest Week, 7–11 November, Beijing, China;
 - Subregional Office for Southern Africa: Held a tree planting event and worked with communities to plant trees in Zimbabwe;
 - UNECE /FAO Forestry and Timber Section, Geneva: Presented the Art of Trees Forest Gallery at the Palais des Nations; launched State of Europe’s Forests 2011 Report; held the 36th Session of the FAO European Forestry Commission (held jointly with the 68th Session of the UNECE Timber Committee), 10–14 October, Antalya, Turkey;
 - Latin America and the Caribbean: Contributed material to the rock concert Lollapalozza, in Santiago, Chile.
11. In addition to the meetings of the regional forestry commission several other major events provided opportunities to celebrate the Year, including the International Model Forest Network Global Forum in March in Spain; the Second Mediterranean Forest Week in Avignon, France; the 5th International Wildland Fire Conference in May in South Africa; the First African Drylands Week in June, Dakar, Senegal; the FAO tree planting event held together with the Italian *Corpo Forestale dello Stato* in October; the Forest Day 5, a joint event of the CPF, in December, Durban, South Africa; and the Second World Landslide Forum in October in Rome.
12. FAO also cooperated with several member countries. The conference “Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy”, took place on 4-7 October 2011 in Bonn, hosted and co-organized by Germany, with support from Finland and Austria³, and in close collaboration with the UNFF Secretariat and FAO. The objective of the conference was to exchange ideas and experiences concerning the role of forests and sustainable forest management in progressing towards a Green Economy and provide recommendations for realizing the potentials offered by forests.
13. FAO also worked with the Government of India on a global conference titled “Rediscovering wood: the key to a sustainable future”. The conference (19-22 October 2011, Bangalore, India) examined how wood use can make a greater contribution to sustainable development and how wood producers and users can benefit from increased prosperity and the growing demands for more sustainable consumption and lifestyles.

IV. Activities within the CPF

14. Collaborative actions from CPF member organizations have revolved around a special timetable for the Year, with selected members responsible for developing specific programmes related to monthly themes. Out of 26 themes identified, FAO was the lead agency for six: Forests and water; Managing risks of forests under climate change; Forests and tourism; Urban forestry; Forests and food security; Forests and mountains.

³ Other countries, including Brazil, China, Ghana, Japan, Mexico and the United States of America have also provided input to the conference.

V. Video Material and Representation

15. In addition to the IYF spot several video features on key forestry issues from around the world were developed over the course of the year including:

- Philippines Assisted Natural Regeneration project video, which has been widely viewed in YouTube.
- Rwanda ‘Wildlife in a Changing Climate’ video: received video footage free of charge from Deutsche Welle and is requested by many other TV outlets.
- Other project videos from Ecuador, Senegal, Mongolia, North America and Canada successfully promoted FAO project work around the world.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Carl Lewis and Anggun conveyed their support and important messages on the Year in a video (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/iyf2011/73068/en/>). Carl Lewis and Anggun also appeared at numerous international events to discuss the importance of trees and forests in our lives.

16. On 20 December, the Forestry Department held a closing event for IYF 2011 at FAO headquarters, which gathered around 100 Permanent Representatives, Rome-based intergovernmental organizations, external partners, and FAO staff.

VI. Sustaining Attention to Forests

17. The IYF has underscored the importance of sustainable forest management and helped key messages reach broad audiences regarding forests. The Year also highlighted the potential advantages to establish one or more mechanisms to sustain attention to forests. At its 20th Session (Rome, 4-8 October 2010), the Committee on Forestry (COFO) recommended to countries and FAO to consider strengthening the idea of an International Day of Forests (IDF). The FAO Conference at its 37th Session supported the establishment of such day, while UNFF9 recommended to ECOSOC, and through it to the General Assembly, the establishment of an IDF.

18. In December 2012, the UN General Assembly through Resolution A/ 67/200 proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests. In the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretariat of the UNFF, in collaboration with FAO, and in partnership with governments, international, regional and sub-regional organizations and major groups to facilitate the implementation of the Day. On each Day, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns.

19. In response, FAO created a dedicated IDF website, launched an IDF logo, and invited the public to post their photos of forests and tree planting on the FAO IDF website. In a similar manner to the IYF, FAO provided public access to IDF design materials for countries’ use, including the logo, web banner and posters.

20. In addition, a 30 second and 1 minute spot promoting the IDF was created and run on CNN International, Deutsche Welle, Euronews and at other local venues, including the Berlin Zoo. The video was also made publicly available on the IDF website for countries to download and broadcast locally on their news networks.

21. FAO will continue to work in conjunction with CPF members to design campaigns for the IDF in 2014 and beyond to maximize the efforts of forest-related organizations and Secretariats across the UN system.