

*REPORT*

Rome, Italy,  
6 February 2019

# **Special Session of the International Poplar Commission**

**INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION  
(IPC)**

**Report of the Special Session of the Commission**

**Rome, Italy, 6 February 2019**

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, February 2019

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
OPENING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (ITEM 1).....	2
VOTE ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC CONVENTION (ITEM 2).....	2
CLOSURE OF THE SPECIAL SESSION (ITEM 3) .....	2
<b>ANNEX I: AGENDA .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>ANNEX III: RESULT SHEET OF THE ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC CONVENTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ANNEX IV: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION PLACING THE INTERNATIONAL POPLAR CONVENTION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FAO .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ANNEX V: STATEMENTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## **Report of the Special Session of the International Poplar Commission**

### ***OPENING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Item 1)***

1. The Special Session of the International Poplar Commission was held on 6 February, at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.
2. The session was attended by Member Countries as presented in Annex II.
3. Mr Martin Weih, Chairperson of the Commission, opened the session. Ms Mette Wilkie, Director, Forestry Policy and Resources Division, welcomed participants.
4. The Agenda (Annex I) was adopted.

### ***VOTE ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC CONVENTION (Item 2)***

5. The Chairperson called for a roll call to ascertain if there was the required quorum for a vote.
6. At the conclusion of the roll call, it was determined that 28 Member Nations were present, sufficient for a vote as the IPC Convention requires a two-thirds majority to take decision on amendments to the IPC Convention.
7. The vote was called by roll call.
8. At the conclusion of the vote, 26 were in favour, 1 opposed, and 1 abstained (Annex III). The proposed amendments to the IPC Convention were adopted.
9. The Chairperson noted that amendments shall become effective only with the concurrence of the Conference of the Organization and as from the date of such concurrence. Therefore, with this endorsement of the reform by the IPC Member Nations, the amendments to the Convention will be brought to the Forty-first Session of the FAO Conference for endorsement.
10. Member Nations requested that the IPC continue its reform efforts after the FAO Conference considers endorsing the new text of the IPC (Annex IV), and recommended that suggestions received during the comment period on Proposed Amendments to the IPC Convention be made available to Member States to assist in the continued reform.
11. The Chairperson thanked all Member Nations for their guidance and support throughout the process and welcomed continued engagement with the IPC as it now considers how best to fulfil its new scope.
12. The Chairperson noted that the IPC will have its next session in 2020.
13. The report was adopted as presented.

### ***CLOSURE OF THE SPECIAL SESSION (Item 3)***

14. Mr Hiroto Mitsugi, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department, thanked Member Nations for their participation and guidance in the Special Session.
15. The Chairperson closed the session at 11:10 hours.
16. The Portuguese Republic requested to have their statement appended to the report (Annex V).

**AGENDA**

10.00-10.15 hrs	Item 1: Opening and adoption of the Agenda
10.15-11.00 hrs	Item 2: Vote on the Proposed Amendments to the IPC Convention
11.00-11.15 hrs	Item 3: Closure of the Special Session

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **ARGENTINA**

Guillermo Valentín Rodolico, Señor Consejero, Representante Permanente Adjunto de la República Argentina ante FAO, FIDA y PMA Roma

### **AUSTRIA**

Günter Walkner, Representative to FAO, Embassy of Austria

### **BELGIUM**

Diego Cadelli, Attaché, Ambassade de Belgique Bureau FAO, PAM et FIDA

### **BULGARIA**

Petio Petev, Ambassador, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Bulgaria to FAO

### **CANADA**

Jennifer Fellows, Counsellor (Agriculture), Alternate Permanent Representative, Canadian Embassy

### **CHINA**

Yubo Xu, Alternate Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of the People's Republic of China to FAO

### **CHILE**

Tamara Villanueva, Primer Secretario, Embajada de la República de Chile

### **CROATIA**

Igor Surdich, First Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Croatia

### **CZECHIA**

Jiri Jilek, Counsellor, Embassy of the Czech Republic

### **FRANCE**

Isabelle Mialet-Serra, Conseillère scientifique, Représentation permanente de la France auprès de l'OAA

### **GERMANY**

Heiner Thofern, Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to FAO

### **INDIA**

B. Rajender, Minister Agriculture, Alternate Permanent Representative, Embassy of the Republic of India

### **IRAN**

Mohammad Hossein Emadi, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to FAO

Shahin Ghorashizadeh, Alternate Permanent Representative, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to FAO

### **IRELAND**

Paul James Kiernan, Deputy Permanent Representative, Embassy of Ireland

## **ITALY**

Alessandra Stefani, Director, General Directorate for Forestry, Italian Ministry of Policies for Agriculture, Food and Forestry (DG DIFOR - Mipaaft ), Coordinator of National Poplar Observatory  
Pietro Oieni, Chief, Forest Products Enhancement and Forestry Development (DIFOR III- Mipaaft), Secretary of National Poplar Observatory  
Grazia Abbruzzese, Technical Assistant (DIFOR III – Mipaaft)  
Giuseppe Nervo, Researcher, Council for Agricultural research and Analysis of Agricultural Economics (CREA ), IPC Executive Committee Member  
Stefano Bisoffi, Researcher, Council for Agricultural research and Analysis of Agricultural Economics (CREA ), IPC Executive Committee Member  
Silvia Ferlazzo, Technical Assistant, National and International Forestry Policies

## **JAPAN**

Naohito Okazoe, Alternate Permanent Representative, Embassy of Japan

## **NETHERLANDS**

Gemma Verijdt, Junior Professional Officer, Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations for Food and Agriculture

## **NEW ZEALAND**

Donald Geoffrey Syme, Deputy Permanent Representative, Embassy of New Zealand

## **PORTUGAL**

José Alexandre Rodrigues, Alternate Permanent Representative, Embassy of the Portuguese Republic

## **REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Yeong-Bon Koo, Chairperson of the Korean Poplar Commission, National Institute of Forest Sciences

## **SLOVENIA**

Gregor Božič, Forestry Expert and Researcher, Slovenian Forestry Institute

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

Anna-Marie Moulton, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of South Africa

## **SPAIN**

José Manuel Jaquotot Sáenz de Miera, Subdirector General de Política Forestal, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación  
Gregorio Chamorro García, Secretario de la Comisión Nacional del Chopo

## **SWEDEN**

Fredrik Alfer, Deputy Permanent Representative, Embassy of Sweden

## **SWITZERLAND**

François Pythoud, Ambassadeur, Représentation permanente de la Suisse auprès de la FAO, du FIDA et du PAM

## **TURKEY**

Ercan Velioglu, Director, Poplar and Fast Growing Forest Trees Research Institute Turkey

## **UNITED KINGDOM**

Elizabeth Nasskau, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom to FAO

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Kelli Ketover, Second Secretary, United States Mission to the United Nations Agencies based in Rome



## RESULT SHEET OF THE ROLL CALL VOTE ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE IPC CONVENTION



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединённых Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

### RESULT SHEET

Special Session of the International Poplar Commission  
(Rome, 6 February 2019)

### ROLL CALL VOTE

**PROPOSAL: Amendments to the Constitution of the International Poplar Commission**

**DATE: 6/2/2019**

Vote No. 1

Votes for: (26) Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America

Votes against: (1) South Africa

Abstentions: (1) Switzerland

Not present: (10) Egypt, Finland, Hungary, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Romania, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia

Majority required	26
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<u>ADOPTED</u>	REJECTED
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ARTICLE XII.1 of the IPC Convention

This Convention may be amended by the Commission by a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Commission.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION PLACING THE INTERNATIONAL POPLAR COMMISSION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF FAO

### ~~Convention Placing the International Poplar Commission Within the Framework of FAO~~

#### Convention on the International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment

#### Article I – Status

The International Poplar Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”) ~~shall be~~ which is placed within the framework of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as “the Organization”) ~~and the present Convention whose object to achieve that purpose shall be governed by the provisions of Article XIV of the Constitution of the Organization~~ and by the present Convention.

#### Article II – Membership

1. Member Nations of the Commission shall be such Member Nations or Associate Members of the Organization as accept this Convention in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII of this Convention.
2. The Commission may, by a two-thirds majority of its membership, admit to membership such other States that are Members of the United Nations, any of its Specialized Agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency as have submitted an application for membership and a declaration made in a formal instrument that they accept this Convention as in force at the time of admission.
3. Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization that are not Members of the Commission may upon request, be represented as observers at sessions of the Commission. Non-member States of the Organization that are Members of the United Nations, any of its Specialized Agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency may, upon request, be represented as observers at sessions of the Commission, subject to the provisions relating to the granting of observer status to Nations adopted by the Conference of the Organization.

#### Article III - Functions

The functions of the Commission shall be:

- a) ~~to study and engage on the scientific, technical, social and economic aspects of poplar and willow cultivation~~ scientific, technical, social, economic, and environmental aspects of Populus and other fast-growing trees. In addition to the Commission’s work on the genus Populus, the Commission’s subgroups may work on other genera that sustain people and the environment. Priorities of the Commission’s work are forest resources production, protection, conservation and utilization, with a view to sustaining livelihoods, land uses, rural development and the environment. This work includes food security issues, climate change and carbon sinks, biodiversity conservation and resilience against biotic and abiotic threats, and combating deforestation.
- b) to promote the exchange of ~~ideas~~ sustainable management practices, knowledge, technology, and material, on mutually agreed terms, between researchers, developers, research workers, producers, and users;
- c) to arrange joint research programs;

- d) to stimulate the organization of congress combined with study tours;
- e) to report and make recommendations to the Conference of the Organization, through the Director-General of the Organization; and
- f) to make recommendations to *the National Poplar Commissions or other national bodies provided for in Article IV of this Convention*, through the Director-General of the Organization and the governments concerned.

#### **Article IV- Establishment of National Poplar Commissions**

Each Contracting Nation shall make provision as soon as possible and to the best of its ability, either for the establishment of a National Poplar Commission *dealing with poplars and other fast-growing trees*, or, if not possible, for the designation of some other suitable national body, and shall transmit a description of the competence and scope of the National Commission or other body and of any changes thereto, to the Director-General of the Organization who shall circulate this information to the other Member Nations of the Commission. Each Contracting Nation shall communicate to the Director-General the publications of its National Commission or other body.

#### **Article V - Seat of the Commission**

The seat of the Commission shall be in Rome at the Headquarters of the Organization.

#### **Article VI – Sessions**

1. Each Member Nation of the Commission shall be represented at sessions of the Commission by a single delegate who may be accompanied by an alternate and by experts and advisers. Alternates, experts and advisers may take part in the proceedings of the Commission but not vote, except in the case of an alternate who is duly authorized to substitute for the delegate. Each Member Nation of the Commission shall have one vote. Decisions of the Commission shall be taken by a majority of the votes cast except as otherwise provided in this Convention. A majority of the Member Nations of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.
2. The Director-General of the Organization, in consultation with the ~~Chairman~~*person* of the Executive Committee of the Commission, shall convene a regular session of the Commission once every four years. Special sessions of the Commission may be convened by the Director-General in consultation with the ~~Chairman~~*person* of the Executive Committee, or if requested by the Commission, or by at least one-third of the Member Nations of the Commission.
3. The sessions of the Commission shall be held at the place determined by the Commission within the territories of its Member Nations or at the seat of the Commission.
4. The Commission shall elect, at the beginning of each session, from amongst the delegates, a ~~Chairman~~*person* and two Vice- ~~Chairman~~*persons*.
5. ~~There shall be a General Committee of the session consisting of the Chairman and the two Vice Chairmen of the session and the Chairman and the Vice Chairmen of the Executive Committee. Recommendations of the Commission should be given due consideration by the National Commissions and other national bodies provided for in Article IV of this Convention.~~

#### **Article VII - Executive Committee**

1. There shall be an Executive Committee of the Commission consisting of 12 members and up to 5 co-opted members.

2. Twelve members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the Commission from among individuals nominated by Member Nations of the Commission upon the suggestion of their respective National ~~Popular~~ Commissions *or other national bodies provided for in Article IV of this Convention*. Members of the Executive Committee shall be appointed in their personal capacity because of their special competence, and shall serve for a period of four years. Members of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election.
3. The Executive Committee may, in order to ensure the co-operation of the necessary specialists, co-opt one to five additional members under the same conditions as are provided for in paragraph 2 above. The term of office of the additional members shall expire with the term of the elected members.
4. The Executive Committee shall, between sessions of the Commission, act on behalf of the Commission as its executive organ. The Executive Committee shall in particular make proposals to the Commission regarding the general orientation and the program of work of the Commission, study technical questions and implement the program as approved by the Commission.
5. The Executive Committee shall elect from amongst its members a Chairman ~~man~~*person* and a Vice- Chairman ~~man~~*person*.
6. Sessions of the Executive Committee may be convened as often as necessary by the Director-General of the Organization in consultation with its Chairman ~~man~~*person*. The Committee shall meet in connection with each regular session of the Commission. It shall also meet at least once between two regular sessions of the Commission.
7. The Executive Committee shall report to the Commission.

### **Article VIII - Secretary**

A Secretary of the Commission shall be appointed by the Director-General of the Organization from amongst the senior staff of the Organization and shall be responsible to the Director-General. The Secretary shall perform such duties as the work of the Commission may require.

### **Article IX - Subsidiary Bodies**

1. The Commission, may, if necessary, establish sub-commissions, committees or working parties, subject to the availability of the necessary funds in the relevant chapter of the approved budget of the Organization. Sessions of such sub-commissions, committees or working parties shall be convened by the Director-General of the Organization in consultation with the Chairman ~~man~~*person* of such body.
2. Membership in subsidiary bodies shall be open to all Member Nations of the Commission, or shall consist of selected Member Nations of the Commission, or of individuals appointed in their personal capacity, as determined by the Commission.

### **Article X - Expenses**

1. Expenses incurred by delegates of Member Nations of the Commission and of their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Commission, or subsidiary bodies, as well as the expenses incurred by observers, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.

2. Expenses of all the members of the Executive Committee when attending sessions of the Executive Committee shall be borne by the countries of which they are nationals.
3. Expenses incurred by individuals invited in their personal capacity to attend sessions or participate in the work of the Commission or its subsidiary bodies shall be borne by such individuals except when they have been requested to perform a specific task on behalf of the Commissions or its subsidiary bodies.
4. The expenses of the Secretariat shall be borne by the Organization.
5. When the Commission or Executive Committee hold sessions elsewhere than at the seat of the Commission, all additional expenses related to such sessions shall be borne by the host government. The expenses for publications relating to sessions of the Commission other than the report of such sessions, of the Executive Committee and subsidiary bodies shall be borne by the host government.
6. The Commission may accept voluntary contributions generally or in connection with specific projects or activities of the Commission. Such contributions shall be paid into a Trust Fund to be established by the Organization. The acceptance of such voluntary contributions and the administration of the Trust Fund shall be in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Organization.

#### **Article XI - Rules of Procedure**

The Commission may, by a majority of two-thirds of its membership, adopt and amend its own rules of procedures, which shall be consistent with the General Rules of the Organization. The Rules of the Commission and any amendment thereto shall come into force upon approval by the Director-General of the Organization, and from the date of such approval.

#### **Article XII- Amendments**

1. This Convention may be amended by the Commission by a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Commission.
2. Proposals for amendments may be made by any Member Nation of the Commission in a communication addressed to the Director-General of the Organization not later than 120 days before the session at which the proposal is to be considered. The Director-General shall immediately inform all Member Nations of the Commission of all proposals for amendment.
3. Amendments shall become effective only with the concurrence of the Conference of the Organization and as from the date of such concurrence. The Director-General of the Organization shall inform all Member Nations of the Commission, all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and the Secretary-General of the United Nations of such amendments.
4. Amendments involving new obligations for Member Nations of the Commission shall come into force in respect of each Member Nation only upon acceptance of amendments by it. The instruments of acceptance of amendments involving new obligations shall be deposited with the Director-General of the Organization. The Director-General of the Organization shall inform all Member Nations of the Commission, all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and the Secretary-General of the United Nations of such acceptance. The rights and obligations of any Member Nation of the Commission that has not accepted an amendment involving additional obligations shall continue to be governed by the provisions of the Convention in force prior to the amendment.

#### **Article XIII - Acceptance**

1. Acceptance of this Convention by any Member Nation or Associate Member of the Organization shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of acceptance with the Director-General of the Organization and shall take effect on receipt of such notification by the Director-General.

2. Acceptance of this Convention by Non-Member Nations of the Organization shall become effective on the date on which the Commission approves the application for membership in conformity with the provisions of Article II of this Convention.

3. The Director-General of the Organization shall inform all Member Nations of the Commission, all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and the Secretary-General of the United Nations of all acceptances that have become effective.

4. Acceptance of this Convention may be made subject to reservations which shall become operative only upon unanimous concurrence by the Member Nations of the Commission. The Director-General of the Organization shall notify forthwith all Member Nations of the Commission of any reservations. Members of the Commission not having replied within three months from the date of the notification shall be deemed to have accepted the reservation.

#### **Article XIV -Territorial Application**

Member Nations of the Commission shall, when accepting this Convention, state explicitly to which territories their participation shall extend. In the absence of such a declaration, participation shall be deemed to apply to all the territories for the international relations of which the Member Nation of the Commission is responsible. Subject to the provisions of Article XVI, paragraph 2 below, the scope of the territorial application may be modified by a subsequent declaration.

#### **Article XV- Interpretation and Settlement of Disputes**

Any dispute regarding the interpretation or application of this Convention, if not settled by the Commission, shall be referred to a committee composed of one member appointed by each of the parties to the dispute, and in addition an independent chairman ~~man~~ person chosen by the members of the committee. The recommendations of such a committee, while not binding in character, shall become the basis for renewed consideration by the parties concerned of the matter out of which the disagreement arose. If as the result of this procedure the dispute is not settled, it shall be referred to the International Court of Justice in accordance with the Statute of the Court, unless the parties to the dispute agree to another method of settlement.

#### **Article XVI- Withdrawal**

1. Any Member Nation of the Commission may give notice of withdrawal from the Commission at any time after the expiry of one year from the date of its acceptance of this Convention. Such notice of withdrawal shall take effect six months after the date of its receipt by the Director-General of the Organization, who shall inform all Member Nations of the Commission, all Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and the Secretary-General of the United Nations of such receipt.

2. A Member Nation of the Commission that is responsible for the international relations of more than one territory shall, giving notice of its own withdrawal from the Commission, state to which territory or territories the withdrawal is to apply. In the absence of such a declaration, the withdrawal shall be deemed to apply to all the territories for the international relations of which the Member Nation of the Commission is responsible. A Member Nation of the Commission may give notice of withdrawal with respect to one or more of the territories for the international relations of which it is responsible. Any Member Nation of the Commission that gives notice of withdrawal from the Organization shall be deemed to have simultaneously withdrawn from the Commission, and this withdrawal shall be deemed to apply to all the territories for the international relations of which the Nation concerned is responsible, with the exception of Associate Members.

#### **Article XVII- Termination**

This Convention shall be considered terminated if and when the number of Member Nations of the Commission falls below 6 unless the remaining Member Nations of the Commission unanimously decide otherwise, subject to the approval of the Conference of the Organization. The Director-General of the Organization shall inform all Member Nations of the Commission, all

Member Nations and Associate Members of the Organization and the Secretary-General of the United Nations of such termination.

**Article XVIII- Entry into force**

1. This Convention shall enter into force as soon as twelve Member Nations or Associate Members of the Organization have become parties to it by the deposit of an instrument of acceptance in accordance with the provisions of Article XIII, paragraph 1 of this Convention.
2. With respect to such Nations as are already Members of the Commission and who become parties to the present Convention, the provisions of this Convention shall replace the provisions of the Statutes of the International Poplar Commission adopted at the second session of the Commission held on 20 to 28 April 1948 in Italy.

**Article XIX- Authentic Languages**

The English, French and Spanish texts of this Convention shall be equally authentic.

**STATEMENTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES****International Poplar Commission  
Special Session, Rome, Italy, 6 February 2019****Portugal**

Vote - YES for approval of the amendments to the text of the International Poplar Commission Convention

**Statement made in explanation of vote**

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal is grateful for the opportunity to make a statement in *explanation of vote* and kindly requests that this statement became part of the minutes of this Special Session.

Our main concern in relation to the previous version of the amendments has been taken into account, therefore Portugal voted YES for approval of the amendments to the text of the International Poplar Commission Convention.

HOWEVER, and recalling our message of the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 when responding to the invitation to send comments on the proposed amendments to the Convention, which we reaffirm, we would like to clearly reiterate that this is a missed opportunity to carry out an in-depth reform of this Convention. Indeed, questions about its current added value and comparative advantages within the international forest-related organizations framework should have been raised. And, at least, efforts could have been made with a view to adequate the text of the Convention to modern international texts, needs and available resources, applying vocabulary and formulations currently used in similar documents thus leading to the redesign of the Convention and transforming it into an up-to-date structure.

As none of the two revisions referred above took place, Portugal would like to remind that the structure and basic content of the Convention date from 1959, reflecting a response to particular needs and demands of a certain period of the World History and that, in the last decades, particularly since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, outstanding developments concerning the forest-related international debate have occurred. We would also like to underline that the current trend in relation to legally binding instruments, particularly when it comes to forest-related issues, is not in the sense of narrow approaches - on the contrary, the single dimensional approaches are replaced by comprehensive and holistic frameworks that can deal with the complex and multidimensional nature of global forest related issues. And we are very well aware of the severe budgetary constraints and decrease of human resources in current organisations and of the absolute need to avoid duplication of efforts and to look for synergies amongst related instruments.

Hence, Portugal considers of utmost importance to prevent further fragmentation of forest-related matters and to enhance coordination among international organisations, institutions and instruments addressing forest issues. In this sense, we are of the view that a more comprehensive streamlining and modernisation of IPC could have happened even leading to a radical change in the very nature of the instrument and in its positioning within FAO as, maybe, it is no longer justifiable to have a Convention with such characteristics but, instead, the launching of a more operational structure within the Organisation seems better fit for purpose.

In light of the above, Portugal strongly recommends the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters of FAO to revisit the text of the International Poplar Commission Convention.

Thank you for your attention!

**The Portuguese delegation**

José Alexandre Rodrigues